TO: The Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Empowering Parents and Protecting Children in an Evolving Media Landscape (MB Docket No. 09-194)

TITLE: Kids & Media – A Spherical Approach

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SUBMITTED: 18 December 2009

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> **No problem can be solved from the same level of**
> **consciousness that created it.—Albert Einstein**

I.   Introduction – Seeing Anew

The issue is profoundly complex: How do we minimize the insidious dangers to children in the *prevailing media environment*[1] [hereafter referred to as the PME] while simultaneously maximizing the immense benefits? How do we promote media awareness and literacy as we defend against media addiction, predation, degradation and exploitation? How do we inform, mobilize and orchestrate the participation of a widely diverse community of stakeholders with sometimes-competing interests toward tangible and effective action?

The first and most obvious reality is that a centralized-programmatic-linear approach has no chance of succeeding. *The ducks cannot be put in a row because there are too many to manage, and they are not all ducks. We are dealing with a very large, chaotic barnyard.*

Equally true, but perhaps less obvious, is the fact that such a complex issue as kids and media cannot be understood or addressed through a process of parallel complexity. *Fighting fire with fire quenches the fire, but attacking complexity with complexity only inflames the complexity.*[2]

And finally, the rapidly changing and volatile nature of the PME is guaranteed to obsolete most or all of the legacy systems, conceptual frameworks and working models now in use. *When the Berlin Wall fell as the result of global change, people on the eastern side were forced to change their systems <u>and</u> their worldview.*[3]

This comment to the FCC inquiry focuses on the need to see the problems and the opportunities in fundamentally new ways, ways that allow us to make sense of the complexity and guide stakeholders to act in synchrony with the hyper-dynamics of the PME.

The guiding assumption in this comment is that the issue of kids and media must be viewed and approached in accord with the complex conditions that have spawned both the problems and the opportunities. *Complexity should not be viewed as a barrier to solutions, but as a bearer of solutions.*

In this comment, we propose the use of concepts, metaphors, models and methods that "simplify" the complexity in such a way that the participants--those with a stake in mitigating the dangers and enhancing the benefits—can successfully adapt to the turbulent PME and collaborate more creatively and effectively in mutual pursuit of the

desired outcomes. Specifically, we propose the introduction of *spherical thinking and spherical processes* to guide the effort of addressing the complex issue of kids and media.

Spherical thinking and processes, which are based on the concepts of *Sphericity*[4], have the potential to assist stakeholders as they:

- Open a dialogue on how to think about (see) and address (act) the issue
- Promote clarity and deeper understanding of the issue and the PME
- Develop uncomplicated, transparent and integrated stakeholder communication
- Co-design flexible strategies, responsive projects and adaptable solutions
- Co-create collaborative techniques for tracking and evaluating progress

We propose that stakeholders 1) re-envision the problems and opportunities from a fresh and valid perspective then 2) adopt and adapt systems to that re-imagined point of view.

In light of the fast-changing PME it is not enough to do old things in new ways. The complex realities require that we do *new things in new ways*.

--Robert L. Lindstrom

BIO

Robert L. Lindstrom, president of C60 Communications, is a journalist, editor and author specializing in the theory and application of rich media technologies in business communications. He is co-author of *Being Spherical: Reshaping Our Lives and Our World for the 21st Century,* which presents the story of a world shaped by science and technology and threatened by an outmoded worldview.

Mr. Lindstrom is the author of *The Business Week Guide to Multimedia Presentations* and of *Being Visual: A Guide to the Rich Media Communications Revolution*, which explores the impact and growing importance of visual communications on 21st century business practices.

He is the former editor of *Multimedia Producer* magazine and former executive editor of *AV Video Multimedia Producer*. He was editor-in-chief of *Presentations* magazine and was vice president/editorial director of E-Biz, Inc. His journalism awards include the Los Angeles Press Club Award for Business Reporting and the New York Art Director's Club award for feature design. In two consecutive years he was named as one of "The Rising Stars in High Technology" by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*.

In 1998, he co-founded the Digital Exploration Society (DEX), a non-profit organization that pioneers the use of mobile multimedia technology for education, community development and environmental awareness. DEX enables students to "pioneer their own futures" by launching technology-enhanced wilderness "DEXpeditions" to nature areas throughout the U.S.

II.   Coming to Grips with Complexity

Just how big and how important is the issue of kids and media? It's sooo big it's everywhere. Try to think of an aspect of our lives that is untouched by the impact of the PME on kids, be it now or in the future. It's entwined with every aspect of life, business and society. *If kids are our future, then the kids and media issue is literally about the future of humanity.*

The list of vested communities includes parents, educators, content producers, content distributors, hardware and software manufacturers, government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, religious organizations and, of course, kids. But this is not only an issue of concern to the stakeholders on the short list. Everyone has a stake in the problems and solutions, all seven billion of us. We might also add non-human animals and the physical planet.

The growing interconnectedness of our media-enabled world compounds the complexity of the issue by the nanosecond. Effects and impacts of media are far-reaching, even if subtle or unseen. *The ripples in this pond reach the outer edges of our atmosphere.*

In the face of such complexity, how do we make sense of the situation? How do we make decisions and act? When we act, how do we know how we are doing at any given time? What are the guidelines, criteria and processes that will allow us to make a positive impact on the issue of kids and media? And of greatest importance, how do we address complexity without increasing complexity?

Spherical concepts, principles, models and methods, which were specifically developed to address the issue of escalating complexity, take an integrated and holistic approach to sensemaking, action and evaluation. Sphericity is based on the fundamental premise that in order to address the problems we face in the 21st century, we need to transition out of an Old World mechanistic mindset and into an up-to-date and applicable worldview. The spherical process—highly visual, non-proprietary, easily accessible and adaptable to a wide variety of goals and tasks—is designed to facilitate the mindshift.

The four primary phases of the spherical process are: [5]

See. In this phase, participants become aware of the whole system, including the dynamic forces that animate the system. The participants see the nodes (individual elements and aspects) of the sphere of the system. They identify the interdependencies that exist between the nodes. They see the connections between nodes and visualize the interactions among nodes.

Understand. The stakeholders are able to see that the multinodal interconnections and interdependencies form patterns that shape the sphere of the system. The participants interpret the patterns and derive meaning from the patterns and shapes. The goal in this phase of the spherical process is to understand why the system looks and behaves the

way it does. The various interpretations and understandings are shared across the spectrum of stakeholders. Ambiguities and competing interpretations are reconciled before actions are taken.

Feel. Because emotional comprehension is as important as intellectual comprehension, it is essential that stakeholders engage the issue at a personal level and *feel* the importance and impact of their actions. In this phase of the process, stakeholders internalize and harmonize their understanding of the problems and opportunities by viewing them from a perspective of *self-relevance*. They ask and answer the questions what does this mean to me and why should I care?

Act. Participants who see clearly, understand wholly and feel deeply are able to be more effective when they contribute to solving the problems and enhancing the benefits of the system. They learn to think and behave in accord with the prevailing conditions. They influence the patterns of the system by creating connections and spurring interactions that are appropriate to the issues. They grow open to ideas, engaged with one another and able to act in concert. In the action phase stakeholders are guided and motivated by an awareness of *mutual self-interest*[6]. They act in their own behalf by acting on behalf of the whole sphere of the endeavor.

Because "being spherical" is holistic and not programmatic, and because this comment is not intended as a specific action plan but rather an approach to addressing the issue, the application of the spherical process to the issue of kids and media cannot be comprehensibly presented here. In hopes of opening the necessary dialog among stakeholders we can, however, take a brief look at how the process might be used to address the issue and begin to ask some pertinent questions:

See. What are the nodes of the kids and media system? How do they connect to one another? How fluidly and energetically do they interact? What is the state of media-related technology? Media education? Parental awareness? What is the current shape of the system? Are we happy with the shape it's in?

Understand. What are the stakes? What are the imperatives? What do all the connections mean? What patterns are revealed in the research and current efforts to address the issue? What is going on in the PME that is unseen and should be surfaced? What is the true nature of the issue at hand? Are we seeing with clarity?

Feel. Where does it hurt? What dangers are lurking in the PME? How does this issue affect my life, my business, my career? What is the source of the widespread stakeholder anxiety surrounding the issue? What happens if nothing is done to protect children? What happens if the wrong things happen? What are the pitfalls and benefits that are relevant to *me* and *we*?

Act. What can be done to influence the PME? What must be done? What are some of the potential strategies for preventing harm and enhancing value? Who is going to do it? How do we begin? How do we ensure continuity among kids-and-media stakeholders? How do we communicate effectively across gaps in needs, wants, motivations, resources, relevance and understanding? How do we evaluate our actions? How do we become aware and stay aware of how we are doing?

III.   Seeing the Whole and Unfocusing

In the face of such extreme complexity it is critical that all deliberations, decisions and actions be made in context with the whole of the PME and its inherent potentials for benefit and harm. It is only by seeing the whole—the big picture—that individual actions and focused activities can contribute with maximum value. *You can have bacon with your eggs without seeing the pig. But to understand the nature of bacon, you need to see the whole pig.*

In this case, the *whole sphere* of the kids and media issue includes everyone in the stakeholder communities, all of the attendant technology, the media rules and regulations, the intricacies of societal norms and customs, current social and business communication modes, private and civic economics, immigration trends and cultural values.

The individual nodes in the system are far too numerous for any person or group to see and understand. The innumerable connections and interactions between the nodes are far too enmeshed for anyone to trace and track. Yet, success of individual and group efforts to address the issue of kids and media is proportionately dependent on seeing the system in its entirety so that decisions can be made and actions taken *in context*[7].

Seeing the whole sphere is not an option; it's a necessity.

The undesirable alternative to a holistic effort is *partmentalism*[8]. A partmentalized approach is one in which each of the individual stakeholders concentrates on one node (part) of the sphere without regard for or awareness of the other nodes and the interactions between them. This approach, which is all too common in life and business, is based on the assumption that by breaking down, or deconstructing, the system and addressing the constituent parts in isolation the final result will work as designed.

When attacking complex issues with a partmentalized mindset, one part or many parts can be well designed and well executed but still fail to contribute positively to the overall shape of the system. The parts could, in fact, affect the system in ways that are entirely unintended and ultimately detrimental.

Sphericity serves as an antidote to partmentalism and mechanistic thinking by helping contributors to *unfocus* and see the whole system. Unfocusing allows the participants in a large, complex system to pull back from tactical and task-driven activities and tune into the connections, actions and energies of the whole sphere.[9]

Take for example the process of determining the age-appropriateness of media content (blacklisting and whitelisting). In a focused approach we establish a standards body and media watchdogs. We debate levels of danger and benefit. Decisions are made, lists drawn up. Programs are launched. Even though we know that blacklisting and whitelisting are not the whole answer, we assume that when combined with other efforts, such as parental control technologies, the desired outcome will result.

But in the complex, fast-changing PME, if the standards committees, the enforcement agencies and the technology developers focus only on their parts with no guiding awareness of the whole system, the odds are slim to none that their individual efforts will combine to produce the desired outcomes.

If, say, the attempt to filter content is out of sync with technology developments, or it fails to account for shifts in cultural trends, or it fails to coordinate with changes in the educational system, the results will not be as expected.

Unfocusing and seeing spherically means that every policy and action derives from an awareness of the whole system, even when the actions themselves sometimes remain a relatively minor contribution to the overall effort.

IV.   Embracing Self-organization and Going FAR

All complex and dynamic systems, the issue of kids and media being no exception, are to some degree *self organizing*. Self-organization occurs as the result of interactions within a multinodal, interconnected, dynamic and interdependent system. In a complex system everything influences everything. Therefore, details of current conditions cannot be used to accurately predict the conditions of the system at any point in the future. *There is no way to build a starship using blueprints for a 747.*

Control mechanisms placed on one or more parts of the system are destined to change the system in unpredictable ways that might or might not be effective. In the case of kids and media the overall system that the technologies, programs and laws are meant to influence is inherently *uncontrollable*.

For example, it is well recognized that no single parental control technology available today works across all media platforms and that within media platforms the technologies vary greatly. [Child Safe Viewing Act (CSVA) Report, MB Docket No. 09-26 released Aug. 31, 2009[10]] From a traditional perspective the obvious assumption is that the

technologies designed to control media access and filter media content fail to work in concert because they are numerous, proprietary and uncoordinated. The conventional response typically involves a call for standards and regulations to cause the technologies to work together by mandate.

The problem with such an approach is that it assumes 1) changes in the PME are *predictable* and 2) there is enough *stability* in the system of media creation, distribution and consumption to institute effective controls. As the October 23 Notice of Inquiry (MB Docket No. 09-194) and the previous CSVA Report make clear, that is not the case. The PME is complex and self-organizing. In a sense, it has a life of its own.

Rather than injecting predictability into the system, the deployment of parental control hardware and software increases self-organization. Every new technology implementation changes the dynamics of the entire system, which triggers the need for more new technologies, which leads to more unpredictable results, which spawns more technologies, and so on.

In a complex, self-organizing system there is no chance of keeping up. There is no way to get a handle on it, or to wrap your arms around it.

How then do we proceed with the business of technology development, regulation, standardization, education, assessment and evaluation when control is clearly not possible?

The answer is to embrace and adapt the dynamics of self organization—to abandon the notion of control and concentrate on influencing the system to make it as *flexible, adaptable* and *responsive* as possible.

FAR (flex, adapt, respond) is a core objective of the spherical process. Flexible systems withstand internal and external pressures without cracking, imploding or exploding. Adaptable systems evolve in sync with changes in the environment. Responsive (or response-able) systems are sensitive to what is happening inside and outside the system.

To better understand the dynamics of self-organization consider child rearing. Any astute parent knows they cannot control their children's lives. There are too many influences, too many connections, too many contributing personality impulses and biological imperatives. The savvy parent knows that the best they can do is influence the sphere of their child to help them grow up with the life skills they need. And what are the three most important skills a child needs to survive and thrive in the complex world of today? Flexibility, adaptability and response-ability.

Many of the submitted comments to the Oct. 23 Notice of Inquiry urge governmental agencies toward greater involvement and toward specific actions. Action is appropriate,

of course, because government is a major stakeholder that represents other stakeholders (the society). But as is true for all stakeholders, the FCC cannot control the issue of kids and media. The FCC has a proportionately large influence on the PME, but it cannot shape the sphere of the system to its own design.

Instead, it needs to use its influence in concert with the influence of all other stakeholders to make itself and the system as flexible, adaptable and responsive as possible so that self-organization in the system becomes an asset rather than a liability. *A child, a family, a community, a team, a business, a nation or a world that is FAR is in the flow, change capable and ready for anything.*

Spherical processes are designed to help systems be FAR and go FAR by helping groups and individuals increase their awareness, stay open to change and embrace self-organizing energies.

V.   Making Sense with Pattern Recognition

When faced with a complex problem, success is as much in the seeing as the doing. As in anything we do, but something we don't always do when we should, we need to see and understand before we act.

One way we naturally see and understand complexity and the self-organizing processes that drive it is by recognizing patterns. *When crossing the street, it is more than a little important to understand the traffic pattern before stepping off the curb.*

Pattern recognition is fundamental to clarity and understanding. In our approach to kids and media it is not enough to see and understand the parts of the system. We must see the patterns formed by the interactions of all the elements in the system. *If we can see the patterns, we can influence the patterns.*

Patterns are not always visible, but they are always there. Patterns develop over time. Patterns emerge from interactions. Spherical thinking and processes employ pattern recognition and visual sensemaking as a means of dealing with complexity in much the same way our eyes and brains interpret patterns of light to form our perceptions of the physical world.

Using parenting as an example again: Good parents and good teachers do not drive children toward one specific achievement or evaluate them on one feat at one moment in their lives. They look for patterns of success across the spectrum of the child's life, and they strive to influence those patterns to be as positive and healthy as possible. *The greatest compliment a person of influence can give a child is, "I like what I see."*

The same holds true for efforts to regulate and monitor the effects of media on kids. A single incidence of the negative impact of one violent videogame on one child says little. That is why researchers, psychologists, governmental agencies, advocacy groups and others look for overall patterns to inform us about the influence of media.

Patterns are also what we are concerned with when we seek to enhance the value and access of media.

Sphericity employs metaphors and models to help stakeholders visualize patterns and thereby make sense of the system. The patterns appear as shapes that can be analyzed, evaluated and interpreted for meaning and understanding.

The pattern recognition process promotes dialog and assists communication among the stakeholders by providing an integrative and unifying vision of the system and its ongoing evolution.

Spherical pattern recognition also provides the means for evaluating the health and condition of the system in terms of the collective expectations of the contributing stakeholders.

In the case of parental control technologies, for example, we judge the technologies and their impact on a laundry list of requirements: cost to consumers; level of consumer awareness/promotional and educational efforts; adoption rate; customer support; ease of use; means to prevent children from overriding parental controls; blocking content/black listing; selecting content/white listing; access to multiple ratings systems; parental understanding of ratings systems; reliance on non-ratings-based system; ability to monitor usage and view usage history; ability to restrict access and usage; access to parental controls outside of the home; tracking.[11]

There is no possibility that any one technology or array of technologies can completely satisfy all those requirements. The objective, then, is not perfection but to achieve a dynamic pattern of success that at any given moment comes as close to meeting the expectations of all the stakeholders as possible.

Spherical models are based on what the stakeholders expect from the system, not abstract ideals or imposed objectives. *What matters is not what we achieve but what we expect to achieve.*

In the Old World mindset the idea is to set the target and come as close as possible to hitting it. With spherical thinking the idea is to come together to decide what we can expect when all aspects of the effort are working as well as possible and do whatever we can to meet those expectations.

VI. Seeing, Understanding, Feeling and Acting

How can the FCC, and other stakeholders, act to influence a system as complex and dynamically changing as the impact of media on children?

How should stakeholders wield their influence in a self-organizing PME where self-organization is a major factor and notions of command and control are anachronistic?

How do we extend our efforts on behalf of children beyond the familiar, media-related roster of participants and contributors?

What criteria should guide our efforts to minimize the dangers and maximize the benefits of the PME for children?

How do we co-design and co-create projects and initiatives that are as flexible, adaptable and responsive as possible?

In response to these and other questions related to kids and media, the authors of this public comment propose that the FCC and other stakeholders adopt and develop spherical processes, models and methods with these overall goals in mind:

- Generate awareness of the issues and establish a means for collective understanding

- Populate the PME with numerous interconnected spheres of influence that address diverse aspects of the challenge

- Develop imagery and decision-making tools that reveal the patterns of risks and benefits in such a way that they are comprehensible to all stakeholders

- Guide stakeholders as they co-design and execute strategies to influence the patterns of the system toward desired needs and outcomes

- Allow and encourage stakeholders to continually "check-in" with the sphere of the initiative to evaluate their influence and see the current condition of the system

- Visualize the collective goal of the overall initiative as a well-rounded sphere that is robust, diverse and has strong tensional integrity (tensegrity)

Spherical thinking and spherical processes offer the additional benefit of assisting in the vital transition away from a mechanistic, linear mindset toward a way of looking at things as they are and are becoming.

Participants and contributors who engage in spherical thinking and spherical processes will realize personal and collective benefits that extend beyond their achievements related to the kids and media issue.

VII.   Exploring Solutions and Enhancing Value

There are hundreds or even thousands of possible actions to address the issue of kids and media. The following are four examples of steps that could be taken in relation to the points addressed in the Oct. 23 Notice of Inquiry as seen from a spherical perspective.

1. **Design and deploy a content clearinghouse for research materials, articles and other information on topics related to kids and media.**
   The *kids and media information sphere* will help stakeholders stay up to date and will be openly accessible and royalty-free for republishing. The content will be organized not around the central hub of the issue but as interrelated and cross-referenced nodes of information that will attract contributors and republishers.

   A visual spherical navigation process will encourage self-organization in the system and facilitate the formation of a living network for use and reuse of the content. It will engage a large and diverse collection of individuals and groups— even those who see themselves as only peripheral to the issue. It will also encourage all participants, including kids, to develop and add their own content by allowing them to see the influence of their contributions.

2. **Engage groups to specifically address topics such as whitelisting, blacklisting and gray areas by opening spheres of communication.**
   A spherical structure of interconnected and interdependent discussions will include such vital tasks as helping kids learn how to ask good questions about media. It will open dialogs between kids and family, families and families, families and communities, communities and companies, and so on.

   The *kids and media dialog spheres* will be linked to related spheres of activity so that outcomes are seen to be connected directly to actions. The dialog spheres will engage content influencers such as National Geographic, MTV and Discovery Communications; technology influencers such as Cisco, Oracle and FamilySafeMedia.com; NGO influencers such as Common Sense Media, the Parents Television Council and the Parent-Teacher Association; and regulatory influencers such as the FCC, FTC and Department of Education to both provide support and act as *tensegrity agents*[12] for the ongoing discussions and related activities.

3. **Create a virtual marketplace for content rating and ranking.**
   The *Kids & Media Ratings Market* will allow all stakeholders in the sphere of the kids and media effort to evaluate and rank content with regards to age appropriateness and benefit/harm ratios. They will also be able to evaluate and rank alternative ratings schemes, including a scheme's cross-compatibility with

alternatives. The rankings will be visible as changing spheres of opinions and expectations. The *media ratings spheres* will reflect the input of individual stakeholder communities as well as overall patterns of changing attitudes and evaluations.

The ratings and rankings process ultimately will replace the Old World efforts that focus on blacklisting and whitelisting with a system that is more nuanced, more participatory and more oriented toward personal choice and responsibility. The visually guided communal effort will cause ratings systems to be more flexible, adaptable and responsive to the fast-changing PME and shifts in societal trends.

4. **Create a system to visually explore and analyze the links between media literacy and media usage**.
   The process will allow stakeholders to make connections between goals and standards for media literacy and actual media usage in the PME. The time-based tracking capability of the visualization process will help stakeholders see the patterns created by the variety of media literacy initiatives and campaigns. Stakeholders will monitor the progress of the efforts to see how and where they impact media usage.

   The *media literacy sphere* will link to and be part of an open source, technology-agnostic media monitoring software platform. Stakeholders will voluntarily and anonymously self-monitor their own media literacy and media usage then feed the data into the system. The resulting visualization will represent, in real time, the ebb and flow of media literacy and the effects of efforts to improve it. A spherical approach to monitoring favors and encourages volunteer participation over mandated action.

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The following sections of this document present a visual overview of:

- The fundamentals of Sphericity and Being Spherical

- The basics of the Spherical Modeling Tool

- A spherical perspective on the kids and media issue

- A brief and hypothetical look at how spherical processes, methods and models could be applied to the issue of kids and media.

VIII. SPHERICITY – AN OVERVIEW
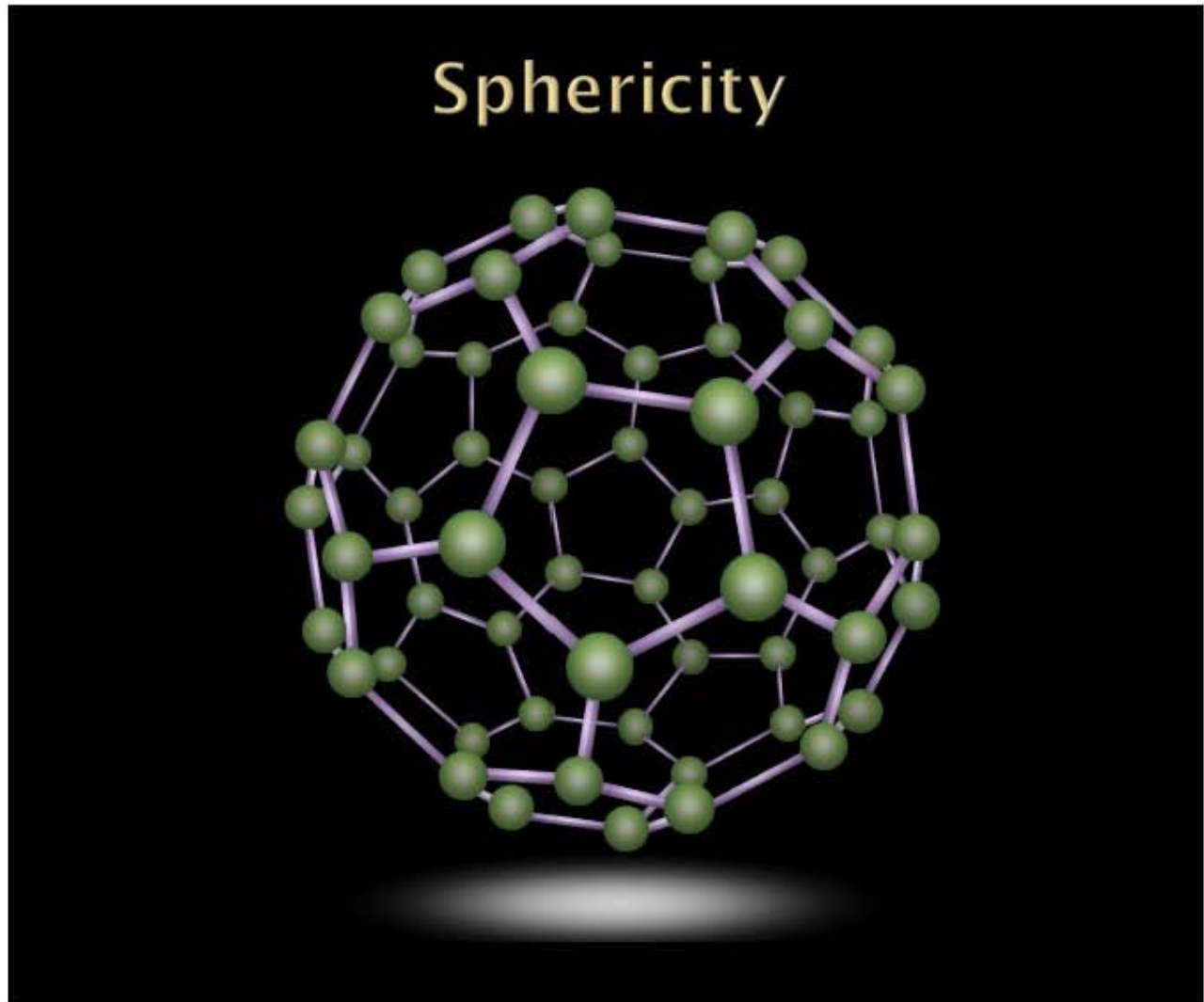
Sphericity is a visual sensemaking process, decision guidance system and toolset that enhances the ability of individuals and groups to flex, adapt and respond appropriately to the chaotic, complex and constantly changing environment of the 21st century.

Sphericity is founded on the basic principle that: How we see the world determines how we behave in it—as we see, so we do.

Sphericity is a new way of looking at things that allows individuals and groups to engage with others more meaningfully, communicate more powerfully and pursue goals more successfully.

Sphericity provides the ability to see the world with new eyes and offers a universal metaphor, guiding principles and adaptable tools for engaging and sustaining the transformation from an obsolete mindset to a new worldview.

IX. BEING SPHERICAL – WHY BOTHER?

THINGS HAVE CHANGED

Einstein once defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. In that sense most of the world has gone insane. It is simply a fact of human nature that we tend to repeatedly and consistently look at problems from the same perspective in which they were created. We attempt to understand challenges and spawn solutions as if the world has not shifted, even when we are well aware it has.

THE WORLD IS DIFFERENT THAN WE THOUGHT

Science has revealed everything in the universe to be interconnected and interdependent, complex and self-organizing. Change is not linear. Complex systems behave unpredictably and surprisingly. Ultimately, cause and effect are illusions and even solid matter is not solid. Particles can be in two places at once. Time and space are relative. We live in and are part of a quantum reality we cannot see and barely comprehend.

WE HAVE A PROBLEM

Most of our attitudes, beliefs and expectations—our mental models of life—are based on a mechanistic, clockwork picture of reality that dates back hundreds of years. We've inherited a mindset that carries with it a false sense of control, security and stability. Our outmoded thinking causes us to make poor decisions, build dysfunctional organizations and suffer ever-increasing anxiety and confusion.

Our trusted, yet out-dated, tools and systems no longer yield the results they once did. They can no longer get us where we want to go. We are stuck in the old while living in the new. Boxed in by our obsolete approaches to life, we tend to overlook profound opportunities and trivialize our finest instincts.

THE PROBLEM IS URGENT

The *speed of the need* is increasing rapidly. We no longer have the luxury of continuing with the status quo while searching for a new model. We need to change the way we see, understand, feel and act, and we need to do it quickly. To respond effectively and creatively to the speed, obstacles and conditions of our current reality, and to grasp opportunities as they present themselves, we must learn to see and think about our lives, our businesses and our world in entirely new ways.

WE MUST SEE ANEW

We need a fresh perspective, a new point of view. We need to see our lives and the world as they are, not as they were. We must bring our mental models into accord with the prevailing realities. We need to make decisions and develop attitudes that are appropriate the context of life in this century.

SENSEMAKING IS KEY

Being Spherical is about dispelling the illusions that wall us off from understanding. It is about seeing and comprehending the source of our behaviors and attitudes. Being Spherical is a way of making sense of complexity and embracing the forces of self-organization. It is a way of understanding what is happening, why it is happening and guiding things to happen as they should happen.

Being Spherical means having the flexibility, adaptability and response-ability necessary to live well in a changing world with its growing challenges and expanding potential.
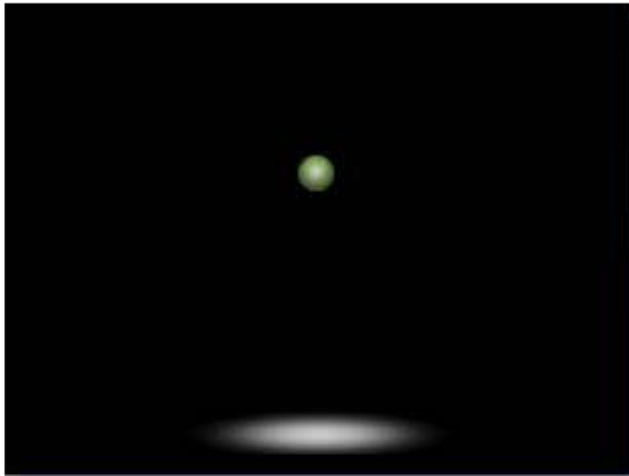
NODES

Nodes are the elemental units in spherical thinking and modelling. Nodes represent one component, aspect or quality of the system.

A node, for example, can represent an entire industry, a company, a department, a team or one member of a team.

Nodes can represent quantitative parts of the system, such as revenue, or they can represent qualitative elements, such as customer satisfaction.

Everything and everybody is a node.

MULTINODAL

No node is an island. No matter what the system, nodes do not exist, and cannot exist, in isolation.

Complex systems, such as ecosystems, electrical systems, the systems of the human body or social systems, are the sum of all the nodes in the system.

Some nodes in a system are powerful, influential and vital to the survival of the system, others are less important and peripheral. But all nodes contribute to the overall structure and condition of the system.

INTERCONNECTED

All nodes exist in relationship with other nodes. The connections between nodes representing people, for example, can be physical, psychological, social, familial, financial, filial, and so on.

Internodal connections can be literal, such as wires, roadways, rivers and train tracks.

Or, they can be relational, such as the relationship between weight and exercise or father and son.

Connections between nodes range from weak and distant to strong and immediate.
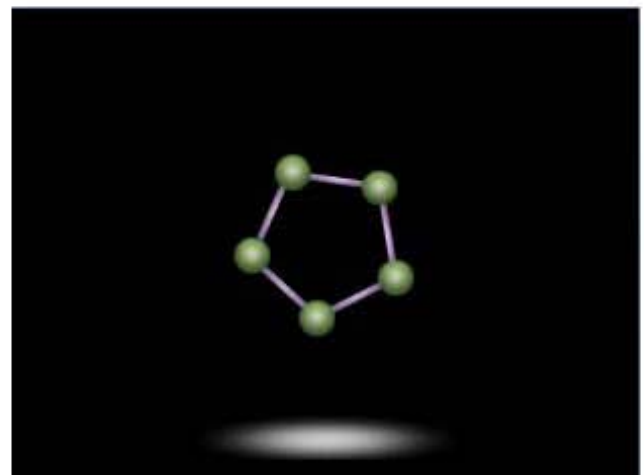
INTERDEPENDENT

Because every node shares multi-directional connections with other nodes in the system, and because all interconnected nodes contribute to the shape of the system, every node is dependent on every other node for creating and maintaining the overall health and stability of the system.

The integrity of the sphere (the shape of the system) depends on the strength and quality of the contributing nodes as well as the dynamic interactions between them.
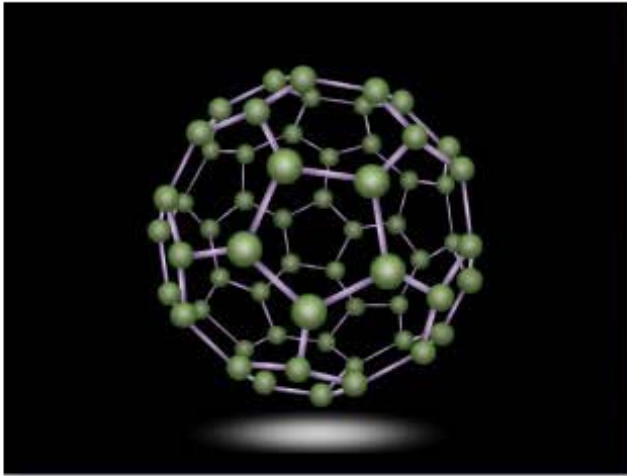
SPHERICAL INTEGRITY

A well-rounded system is a healthy system.

A sphere (system) that is populated with robust and well-connected nodes is said to have strong spherical integrity.

A system that is energetic, functional, effective and beneficial is represented visually as a comparatively complete and well-rounded sphere.

Spherical integrity, which is a primary goal of spherical processes and methods, applies equally to living and non-living systems.
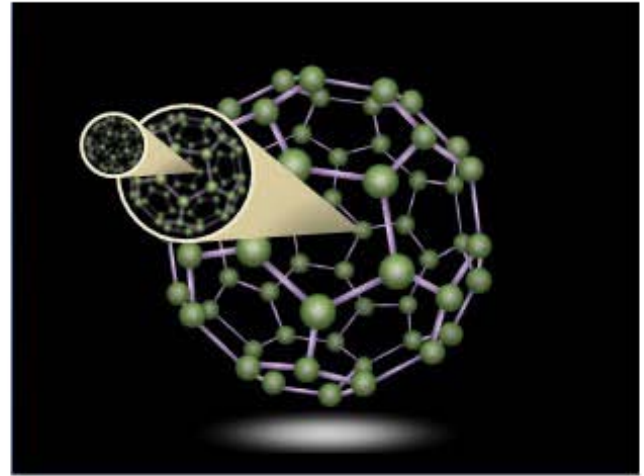

SPHERES WITHIN SPHERES

Every node is a sphere in its own right. Every node is composed of nodes and interconnections and has its own unique shape.

At the same time, every sphere is a node connected to larger spheres.
The larger spheres are connected to ever larger and more complex spheres.

Every system, therefore, is a system within a system. As Buckminster Fuller said, "Everything is a system. There are no non-systems."
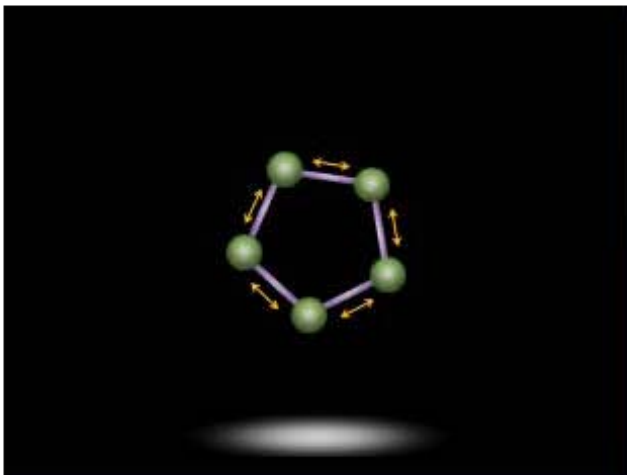
DYNAMIC INTERCONNECTIONS

Spheres are not static. All nodes in a sphere are energetically interconnected and influence one another. Spheres are interactive and constantly changing.

The energy flow between nodes in spherical models represents the push and pull, back and forth, give and take that exists in all systems.

The connective energies in a system range from weak and barely detectable to strong and overt.

The flow of activity and influence between nodes is temporal. Spheres change with time.
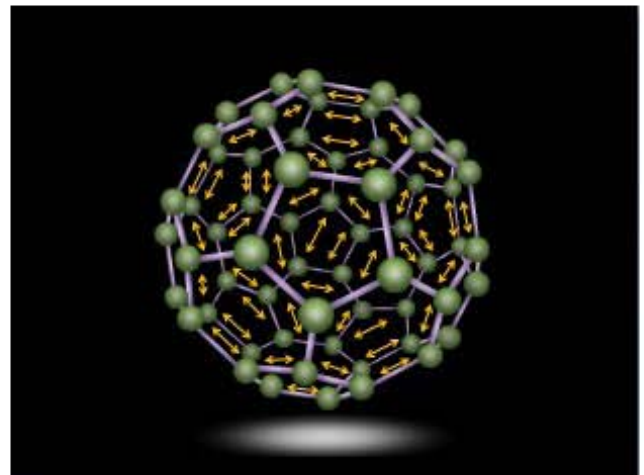
TENSEGRITY

The energy flow between nodes is the dynamic force that forms and maintains the sphere.

Tensegrity (a combination of tension and integrity) is responsible for the structural integrity of the sphere.

Tensegrity refers to both the pull (tension) and the push (compression) that occurs at every junction where nodes interconnect.

Strong tensegrity is a characteristic of nodally well-populated, well-connected and robustly healthy systems.
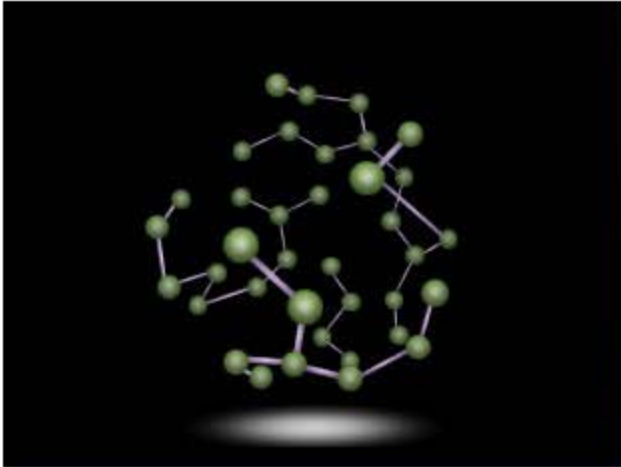
LOSS OF SPHERICAL INTEGRITY

Because nodes are tensegrally interconnected and interdependent, a system that loses vital nodes and lacks vigorous interconnections becomes feeble, fragile and unstable.

The sphere of the system shrinks, deforms and warps. It becomes unhealthy and loses integrity.

A system that that manifests weak spherical integrity is dysfunctional and inefficient. It fails to maintain the energy and vitality that is necessary for growth and adaptation.

SYSTEM FAILURE

Sometimes a system experiences catastrophic loss of spherical integrity, such as when an individual has a life-threatening illness, or a company experiences a sudden drop in market share, or an ecosystem is hit by a dramatic change in environmental conditions.

When this happens, internodal and intranodal connections fail and the sphere of the system loses structural viability. A system that loses all spherical integrity ultimately collapses and ceases to exist.
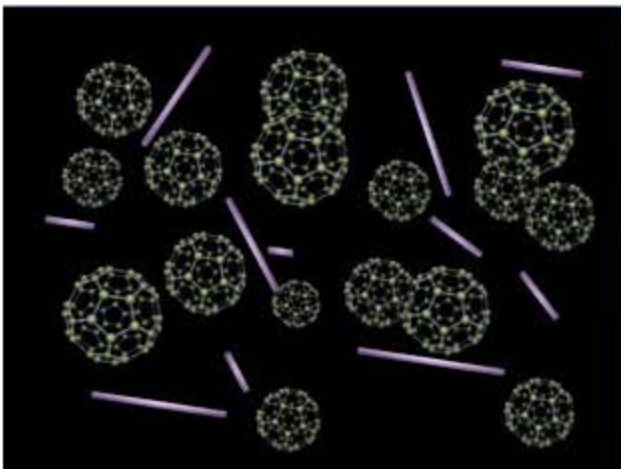
MESSY SYSTEMS

Because every complex system is composed of multiple interconnected nodes interacting dynamically and sometimes randomly, every system is inherently chaotic.

Even in healthy and well-integrated spheres, order routinely breaks down, connections are broken and reformed. Nodes disconnect and reconnect.

Due to naturally occurring chaos, the system cannot ultimately be controlled, which holds true for the sphere of a person, the sphere of a society or even the sphere of a machine.
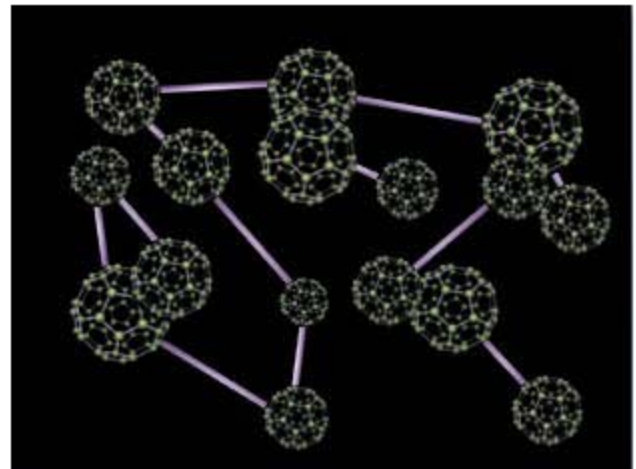
SELF-ORGANIZATION

Stakeholders (nodes) in the system intentionally and instinctively introduce organizational structure to give the system stability, functionality and efficiency.

Complex systems also self-organize.

Chaos sets up the conditions for self-organization by disrupting connections and energy patterns and by changing relationships between elements.

For this reason, systems can be influenced toward a desired shape, but the processes that shape complex systems cannot be entirely controlled.
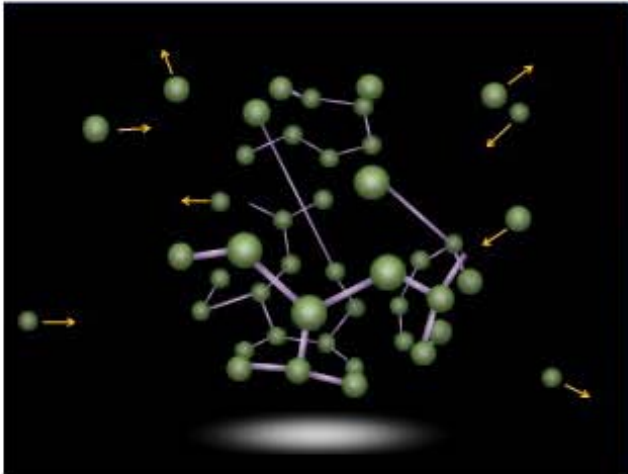
NODAL MIGRATION

Dynamic systems are always reshaping and reforming as the result of the tensegral interactions between nodes and the impact of the environment in which the system operates.

It is through nodal migration that spheres refresh themselves and adapt to their environments.

Nodes disconnect (emigrate) when they are attracted to other spheres. Nodes connect (immigrate) when they are attracted to a sphere. This causes spheres to visibly wax and wane.
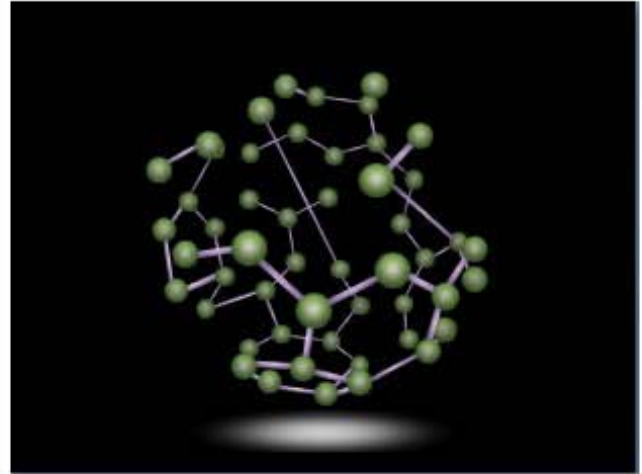

NO PERFECT SPHERES

There are no perfect systems in the universe, either natural or manmade.

Perfect sphericity is an ideal condition that represents a desired state not an achievable one.

The shape of the system is always changing as the result of deliberate organization, self-organization, nodal migration and tensegral forces. At any given time the image of the system looks different.

Therefore, no spherical representation of a system ever appears as perfectly rounded.
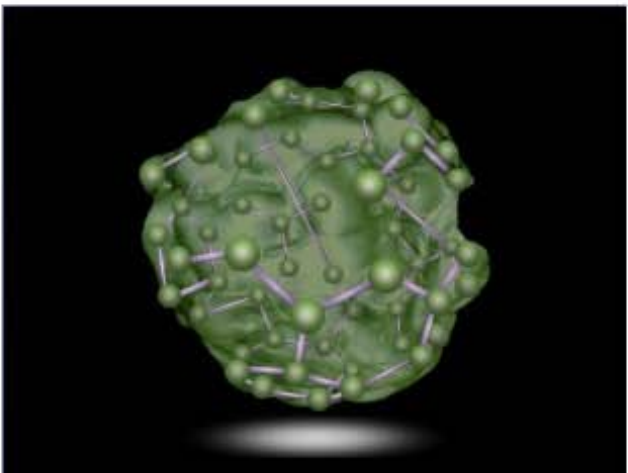
VARIABLE PATTERNS

Misshapen or missing nodes and weak or missing connections create dents and bumps in the visualization of the system.

Aspects of the system that are working well contribute to a smooth and even surface.

Problems in the system are visualized as deformations or warping that make the shape of the sphere irregular and less spherical.

When nodes fail to meet the needs of the system, they cause the system to lose roundness.
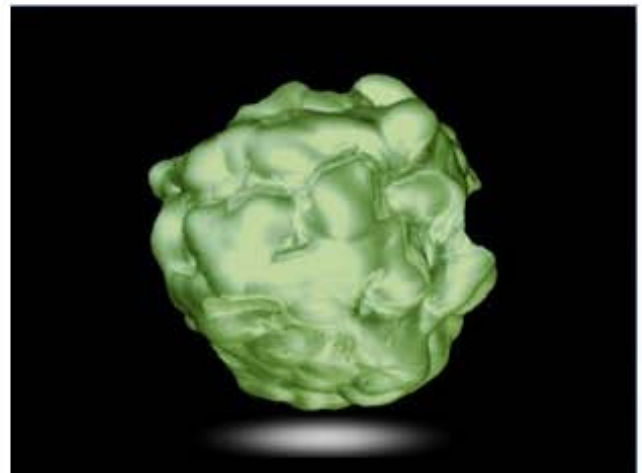
SEEKING SPHERICITY

Every action and interaction in the system influences the overall shape of the sphere.

The purpose of spherical thinking and spherical visualization processes is to guide stakeholders in the system toward actions and behaviors that smooth out the deformations.

The objective of the stakeholders is to make the system as well-rounded as possible, always with the understanding that systems are ever-changing and that no system is perfect.
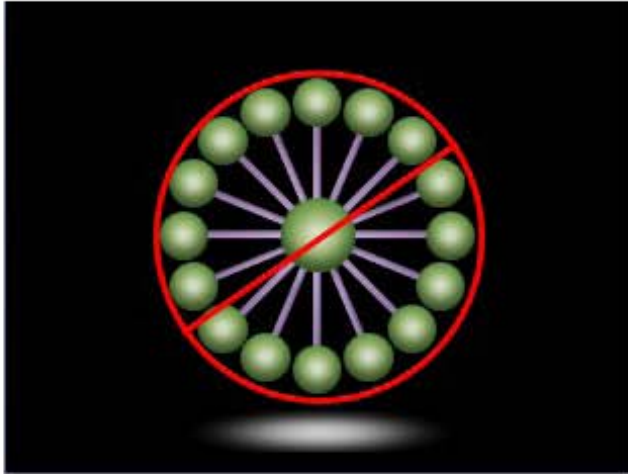
NON-CENTRALIZED

The concepts and models used in spherical thinking and processes should not to be confused with the "roundness" of a hub and spoke structure.

Spheres have no central node from which other nodes radiate. Even though some nodes have more influence on the structure and integrity of the sphere than others, all nodes share the sphere,

Wagon wheel-shaped organizational structures result in a lack of interconnection between and among the orbiting nodes.
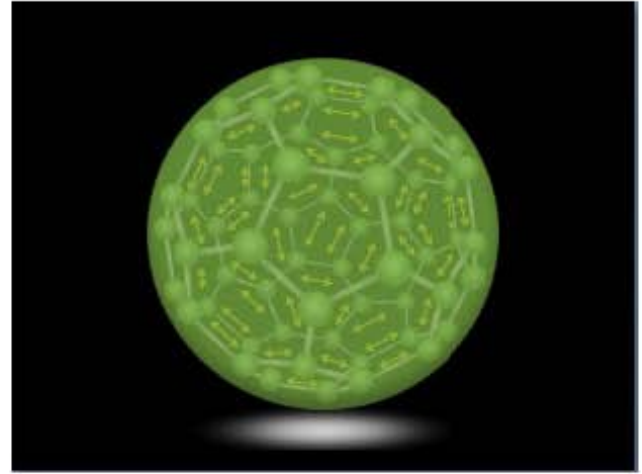
UNIFIED AND INTEGRATED

Spherical thinking and spherical methods employ the sphere as a metaphor.

The sphere serves as a holistic representation of complex systems in which systems are seen as unified and integrated.

The spherical image, which is a visual antidote to a mechanistic and partmentalized view of systems, is characterized by a lack of separation and separateness.

Everything in the system is a part, nothing is apart.
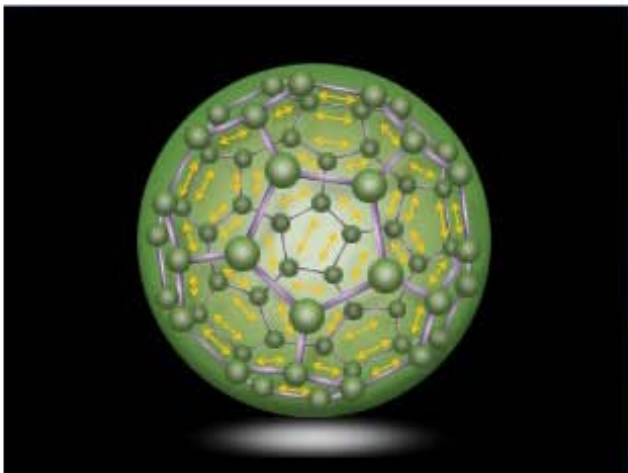
VISUAL METAPHOR

Spheres are powerful symbols of wholeness, integration and oneness.

Physically spheres are structurally strong, resistant to friction and resistant to pressure. Spheres are efficient in their use of space and material. Sphere forms are often used in nature as protection.

Conceptually, spheres are enveloping and encompassing—the spheres of our lives, spheres of activity, spheres of influence. Spheres represent cycles of time and timelessness.


HOLISTIC VISUALIZATION

We use spheres all the time: on our money, on our buildings, in machinery, in medicine, in works of art, in mythology and in spiritual ritual.

Sphericity uses spheres to represent the sum of the patterns created by the energy flow between tensegrally interconnected and interdependent elements in systems.

Spheres guide stakeholders toward a more productive, more meaningful and deeper systemic awareness.
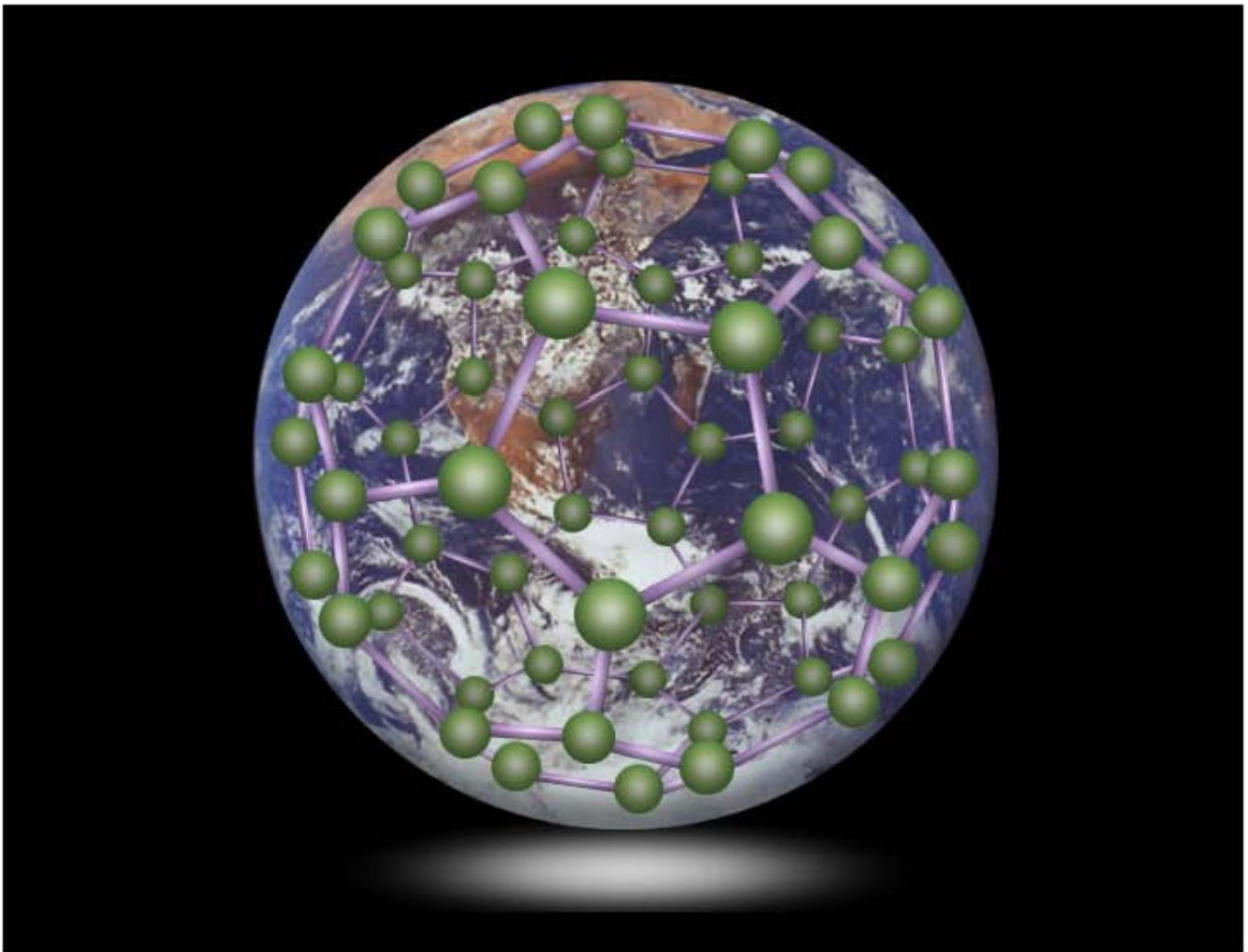
SPHERICAL WORLDVIEW

   As is true for all systems of complex interrelationships—for all life—spheres are continuously reshaping, reforming, reinventing and evolving as the result of countless influences.

   In the image of the sphere of a system we see change as emerging patterns of interconnection and interactions. New spheres are always coming into being even as other spheres dissolve.
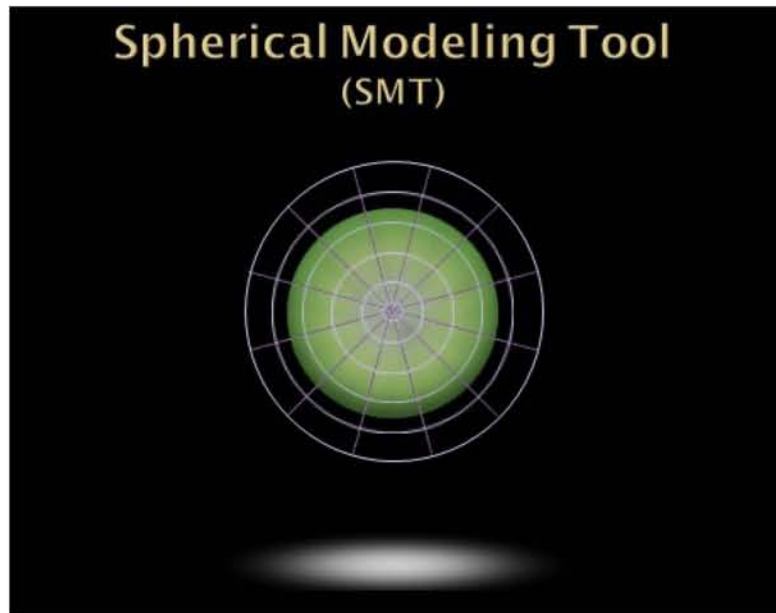
   Sphericity's purpose is to help individuals and groups be in accord with the way things are.

   Being spherical means flexing, adapting and responding appropriately to the forces of change. It means seeing with clarity and acting in context.

   Sphericity presents a picture of the world as it is and is becoming.

   Sphericity is a guide to a worldview that is both ancient and emerging.

X. THE SPHERICAL MODELLING TOOL (SMT)

The SMT, which works in conjunction with the concepts and principles of Sphericity, is a patented diagrammatic process for understanding and evaluating complex systems.

The purpose of the SMT is to guide individuals and groups toward a better understanding of systems and to help them evaluate the condition of those systems.

It provides an integrative and holistic method for understanding, planning, comparing and evaluating the elements in the system and their relationship to one another.

The SMT is available for use under a Creative Commons[13] license. The terms of the license make the SMT available to individuals and companies interested in adapting it to specific projects and processes.
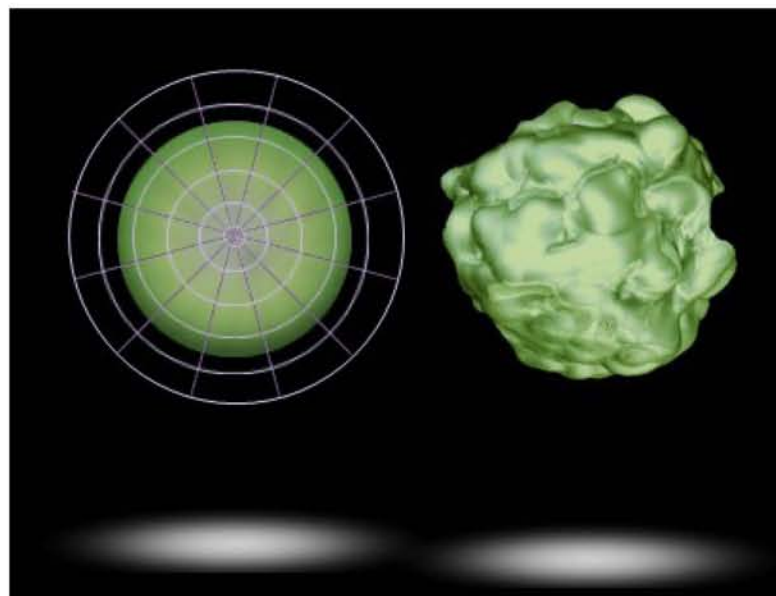
SMT VISUALIZATION MODES

The SMT depicts system dynamics in both 2D and 3D visualizations.

The 2D model is the working diagram on which users plot data and generate patterns that reflect the perceived condition of the sphere of the system.

The 3D version provides a holistic, dimensional understanding of the condition of the system by representing the data as indents and protrusions—deviations from ideal roundness.

The purpose of both views is to demonstrate the degree of roundedness of the system at any given time.
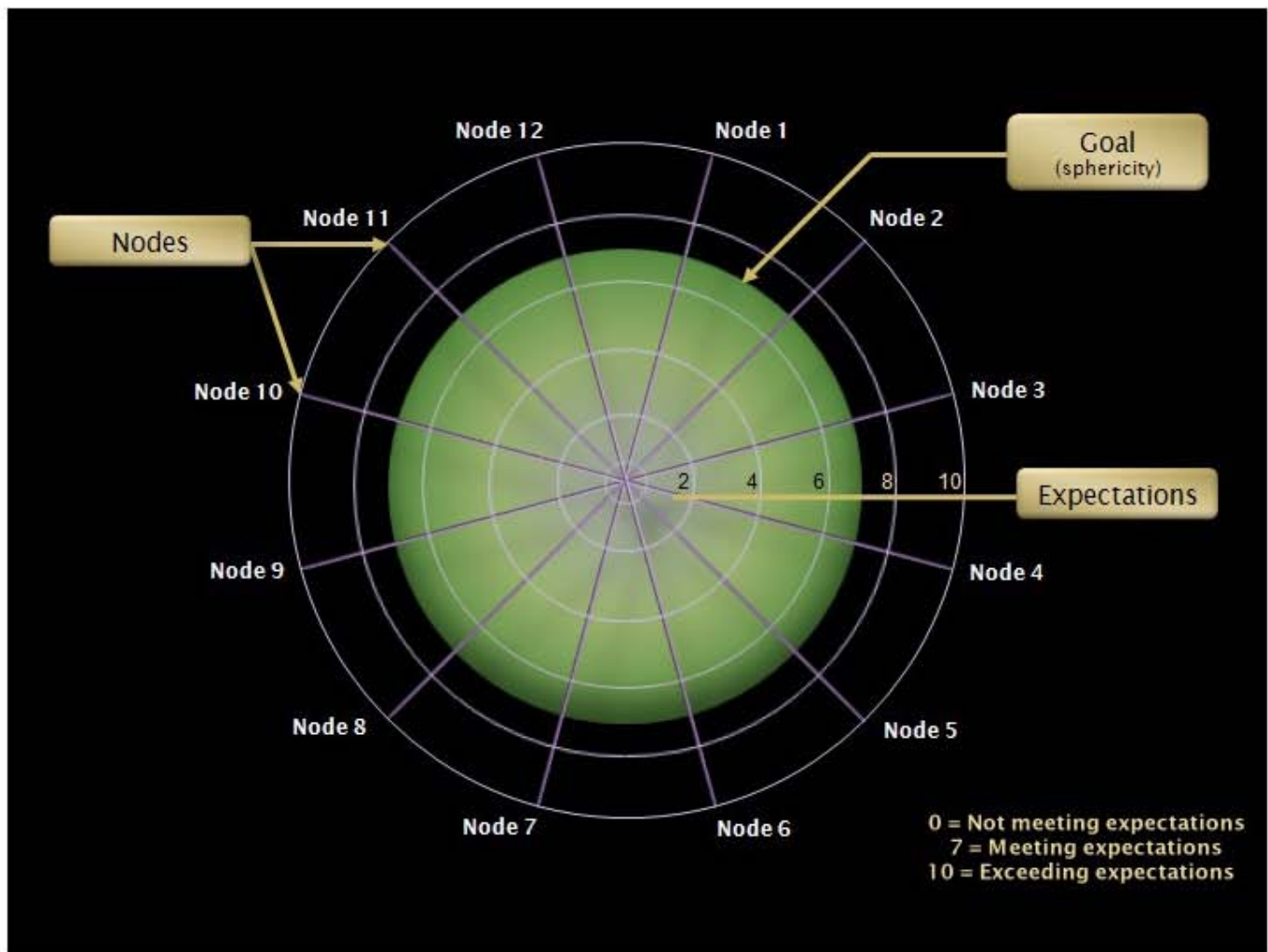
2D SMT - NODES, SCALE, EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS

   Users plot nodes on the SMT with regards to each node's influence on the overall roundness of the system. Roundness, or sphericity, represents the desired condition of the system as determined by the users of the model.

   To begin, users identify the nature of the system they wish to analyze and determine which nodes (elements or aspects of the system) should appear in the model.

   The SMT depicts nodes as labels arrayed around the diameter of a circle, which is a 2D representation of the 3D sphere.

   Any number of nodes can be depicted, limited only by the size of the display.

   The model draws axis lines corresponding to each node.

   A valuation scale, such as 1-10 in the example here, is assigned to the axis lines.

   A value toward the middle of the scale is set by the users to represent the desired expectation. (The example shows 7.)

   The goal of the participants is to bring all node values as close to the desired expectation (sphericity) as possible.
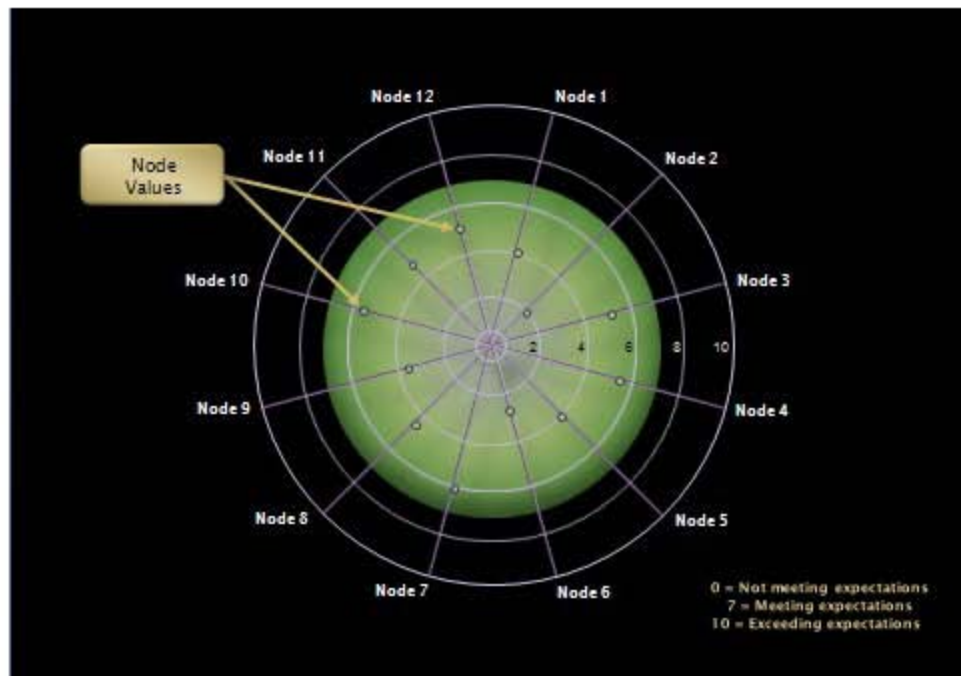
PLOTTING THE NODES

The participating users ask how well particular aspects are meeting, failing to meet or exceeding expectations. They assign each node a value. Users then plot the values on the axis lines.
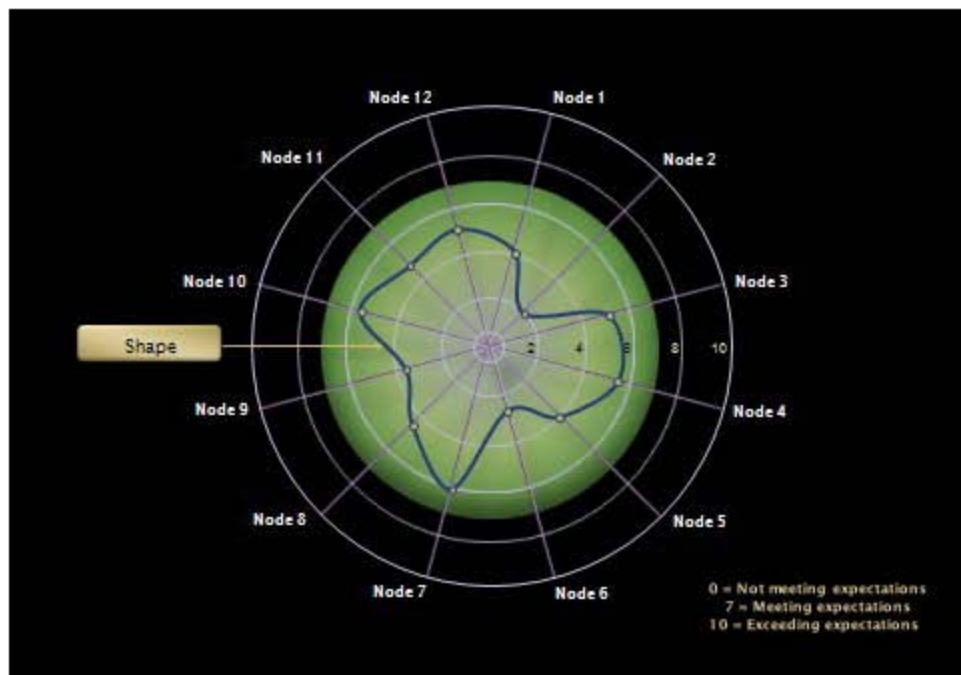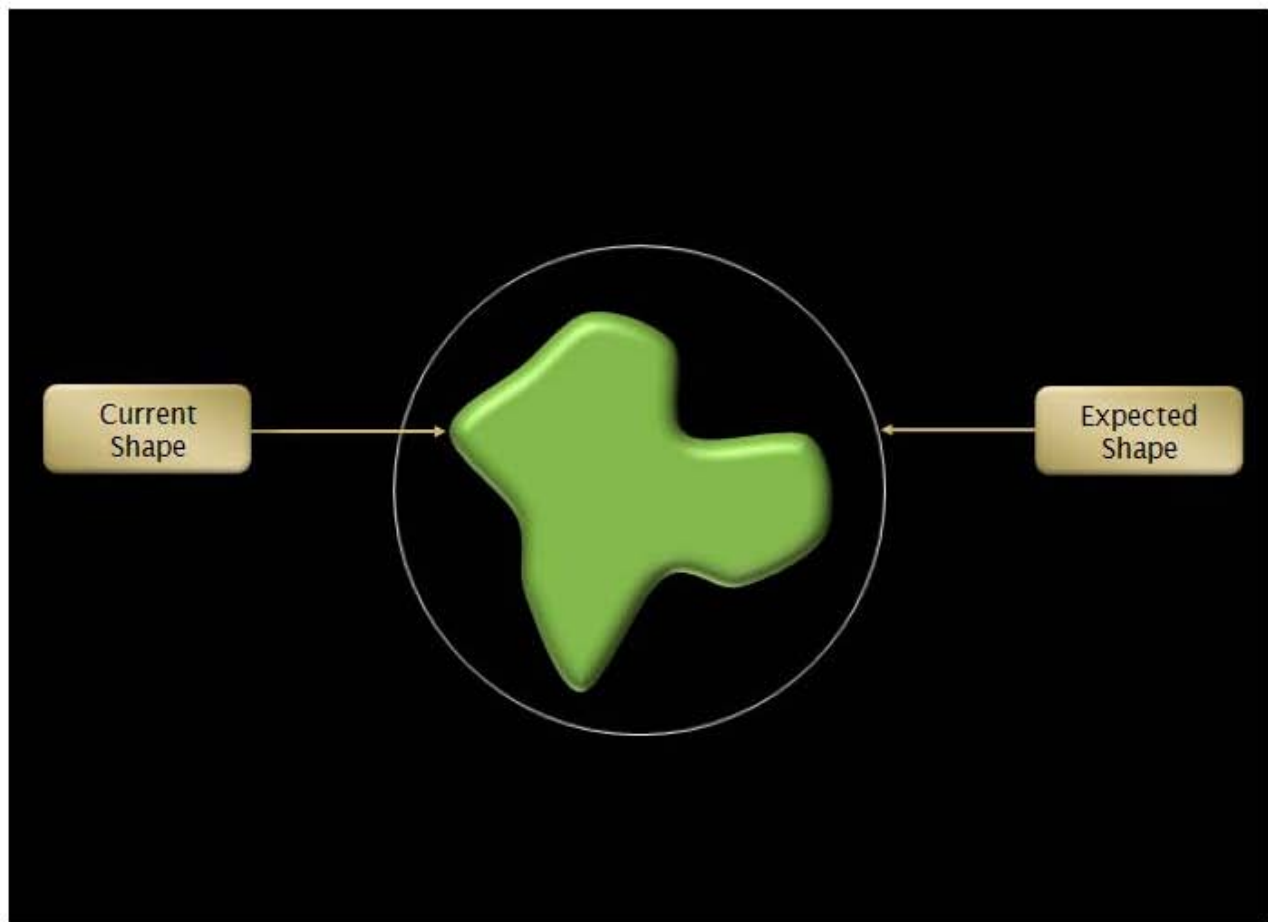

DISPLAYING THE SHAPE

The plotted values are connected to form a pattern, or shape.

Irregularities in the shape represent gaps between the expected values of each element in the system and the current perceived values.

The overall shape represents the perceived condition of the system in relation to the expectations of the stakeholders.

AWARENESS AND ASSESSMENT

The SMT helps stakeholders "see what they are thinking" by generating a visualization of their perceptions of the condition of the system.

Stakeholders use the SMT to communicate their perceptions to others who can then easily determine the meaning of the patterns and shapes.

The resulting shape reveals areas of progress or failure over time along with individual areas of achievement and deficiency.

Once nodes in need of improvement are identified, stakeholders are better able to determine where and how they can contribute to rounding the shape of the sphere.

The model makes visible the contributions and influences of each stakeholder up to that moment and guides further efforts to enhance the shape of the sphere.

The SMT provides a vision of the system in which no single node or group of nodes can be influenced without considering how all nodes will be affected.

The SMT triggers questions such as: Are we happy with this shape? What is wrong with this shape? How can we change it? How will the changes affect the whole system?

XI
KIDS & MEDIA
A Spherical
Perspective
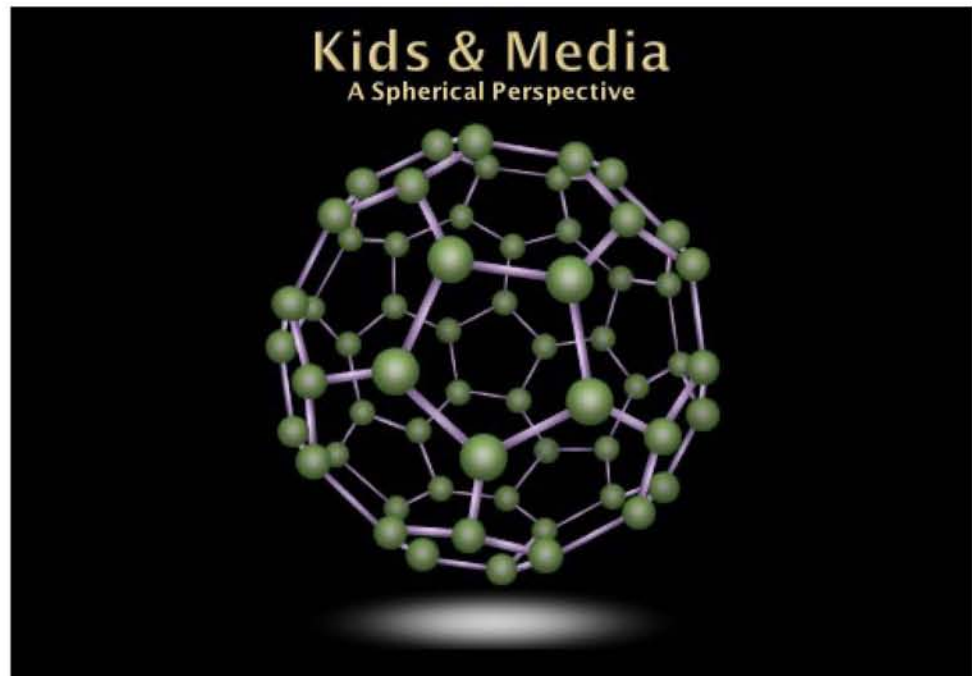
   The complex issue of kids and media is ideally suited to spherical awareness and assessment processes, including application of the Spherical Modelling Tool in a variety of ways. The following images and explanations take a look at the issue from a spherical perspective and suggest some possible approaches to adapting the SMT to assist a broad-based effort to address the problems and opportunities of kids and media.


KIDS & MEDIA
Circa 1985
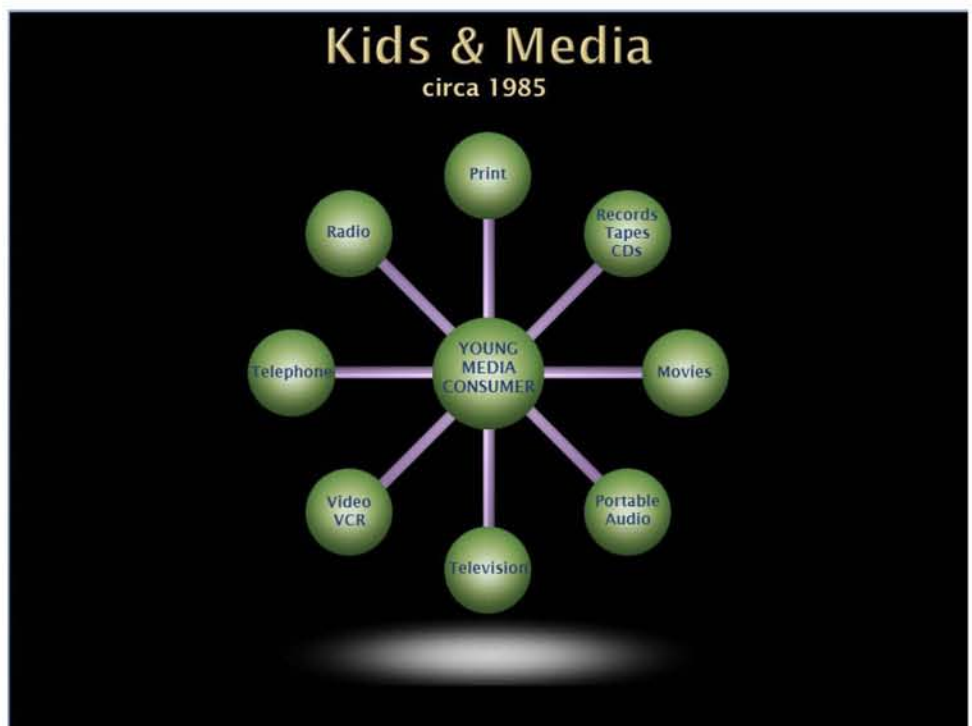
   About 25 years ago, the prevailing media environment (PME) was dominated by discrete media formats that were accessed by separate media devices.
   The consumer had relatively few format and delivery options. Media creation was largely the product of experts and professionals. Media distribution for the most part occurred through centralized channels.
   Media consumption was largely an individual experience. Shared media experiences, such as concerts, movies and group viewing and listening, also involved discrete formats, devices and distribution channels.
   The social and technological realities created a hub and spoke organizational structure.
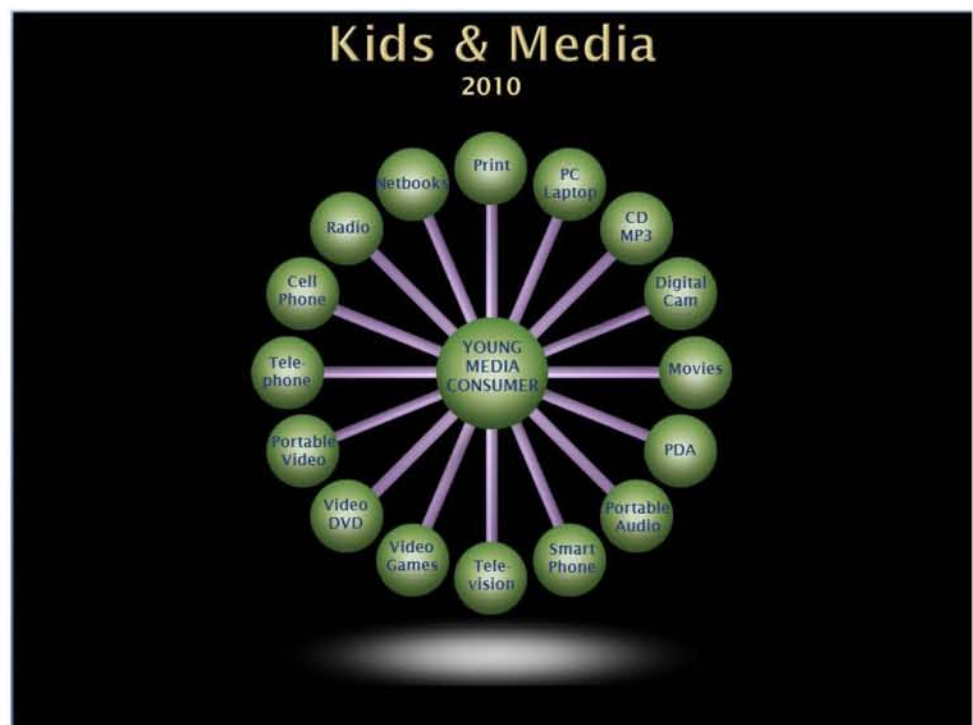
KIDS & MEDIA
Content Mediation
& Child Protection
circa 1985
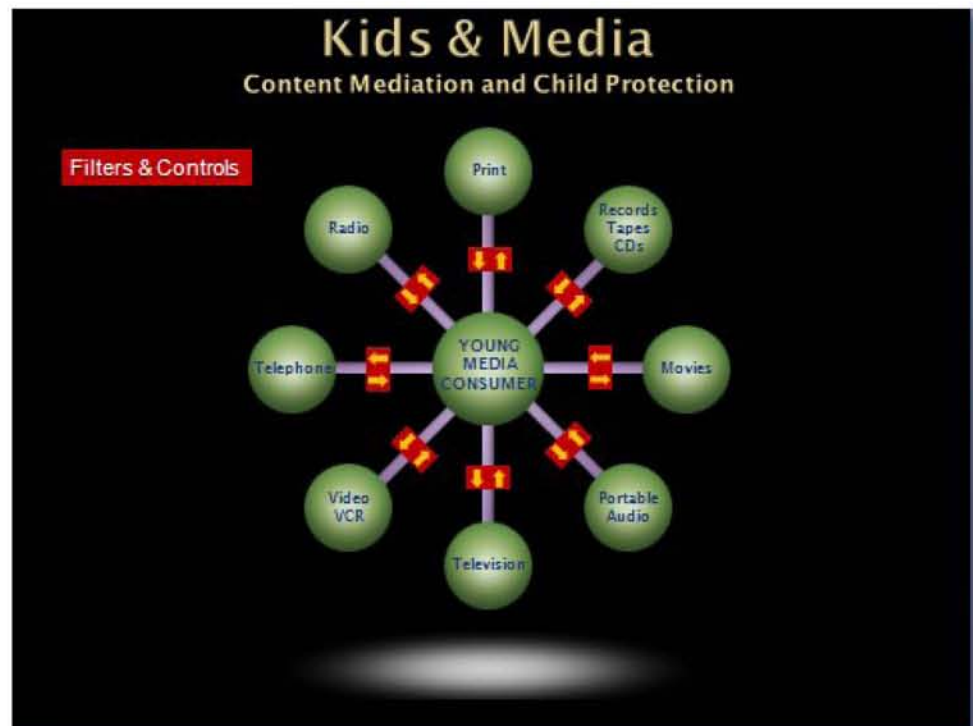
   At the time, media consumption among children was relatively controllable. Media consumption by children could be mediated and controlled via access limitations and censorship.

   Filters and controls operated with relative effectiveness across the media production, distribution and delivery spectrum. Filtering and control technologies, ratings and standards, rules and regulations, parental guidance and media education combined effectively to protect children from negative media influences.

KIDS & MEDIA
2010

   During the past quarter of a century, and most spectacularly during the last ten years or so, the PME has seen a dramatic proliferation of content sources, formats and devices brought about by the advent of digital technologies.

KIDS & MEDIA
Mediation &
Control
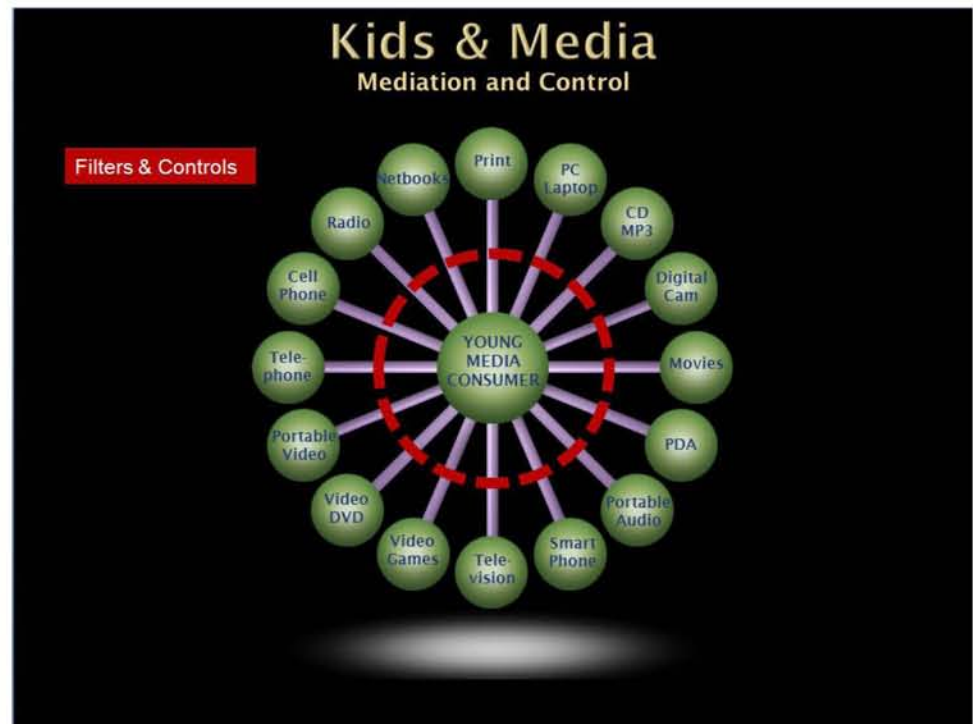
When viewed from a 1980s perspective, it seems as if the same systems of mediation and control would remain effective if properly scaled up to fit the new media landscape. But the ability of digital media to cross-pollinate, transform and transcend media content, delivery channels and devices changed the picture entirely.

**KIDS & MEDIA**
Digitally Webbed
Media
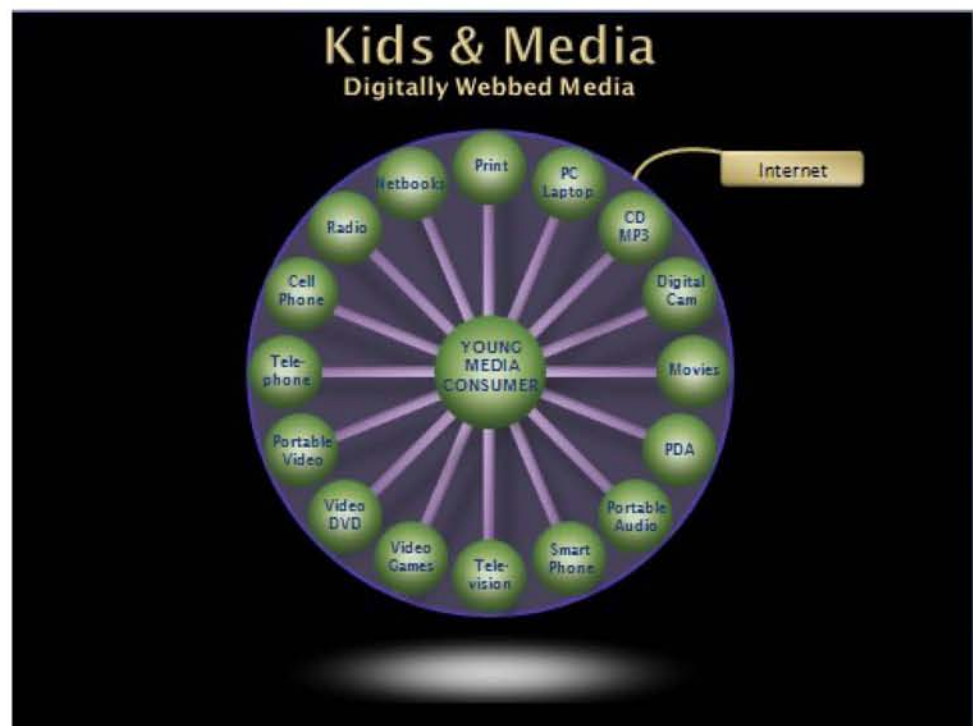
The PME was altered forever by the Internet and the World Wide Web, which combined to change the patterns of media production, distribution and consumption.

Digitally webbed media changed the realities of content consumption for consumers of all ages.

Media consumers still maintain a personal relationship with their content and devices, but now they access, share and even create content without the restrictions of the natural barriers of analog content, discrete devices and centralized media distribution.

KIDS & MEDIA
Fragmentation and Chaos
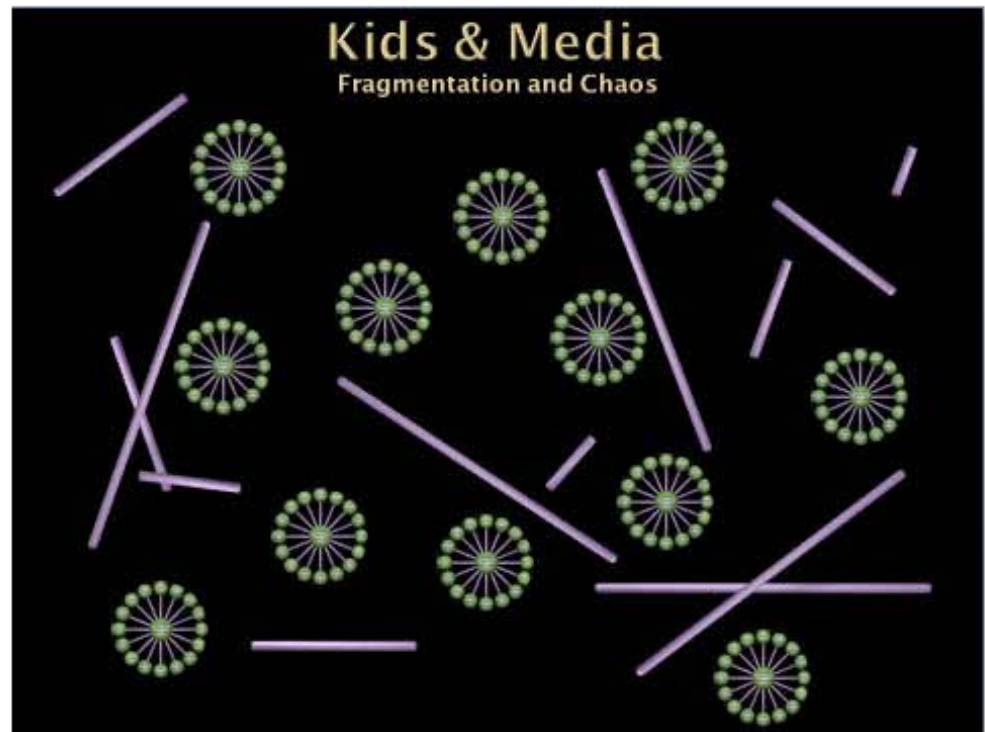
Earlier organizational patterns of media creation, delivery and consumption broke down under the influence of digitization and webification. The incomplete transition from analog to digital and the resistance and adaptation struggles of vested individuals and organizations led to a fragmented and chaotic PME.

Ironically, young media consumers were among the best and fastest at responding to and adopting the new formats, devices and channels. They proved eager for the change and, to some extent, relished the chaos produced by the changes.
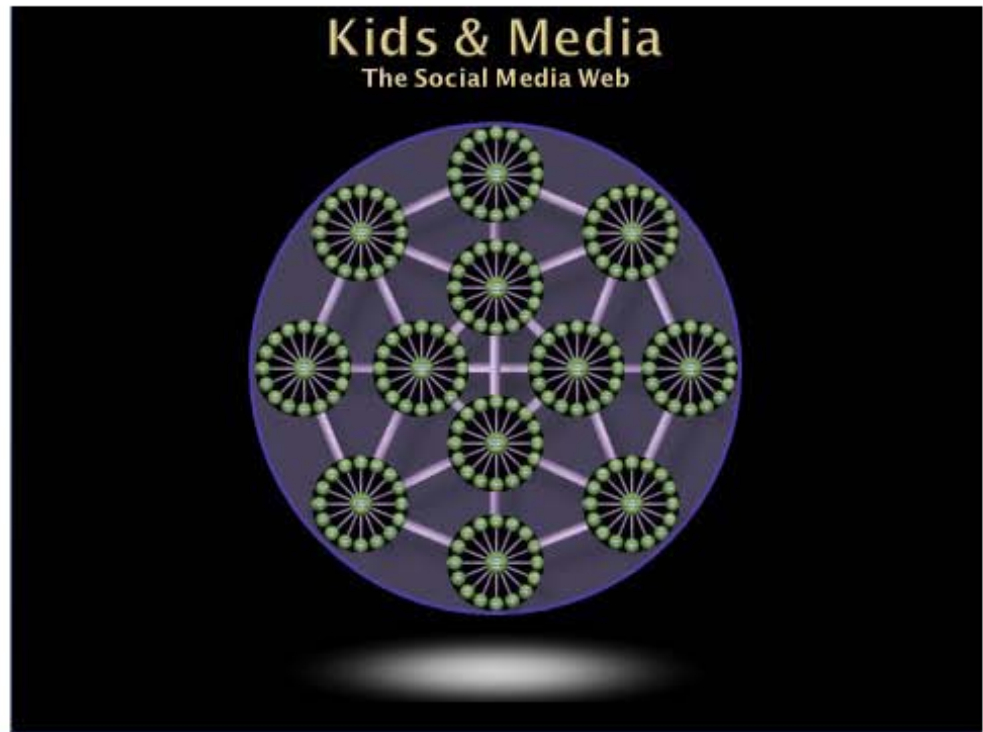

KIDS & MEDIA
Reorganization & Self-organization
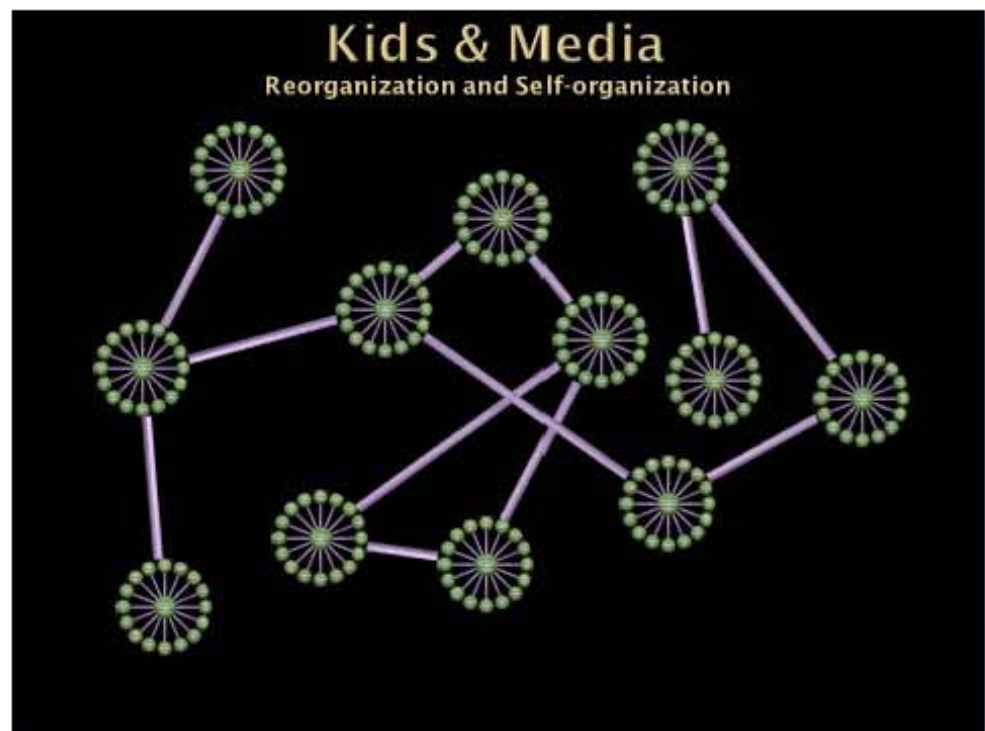
As happens in unstable chemical reactions, moments of breakdown in social order and other manifestations of chaos, within a relatively short period of time the chaotic system reorganized.

The reorganization occurred as stakeholders in the system responded with reinvention and innovation to the turbulent conditions of the PME and as a result of natural self-organizing energies within the system.

KIDS & MEDIA
The Social
Media Web

The system of media creation, delivery and consumption dynamically reorganized and self-organized around media sharing and socialization. The connections and interaction became disintermediated and decentralized.

KIDS & MEDIA
Content Mediation
**& Child Protection**
circa 2010
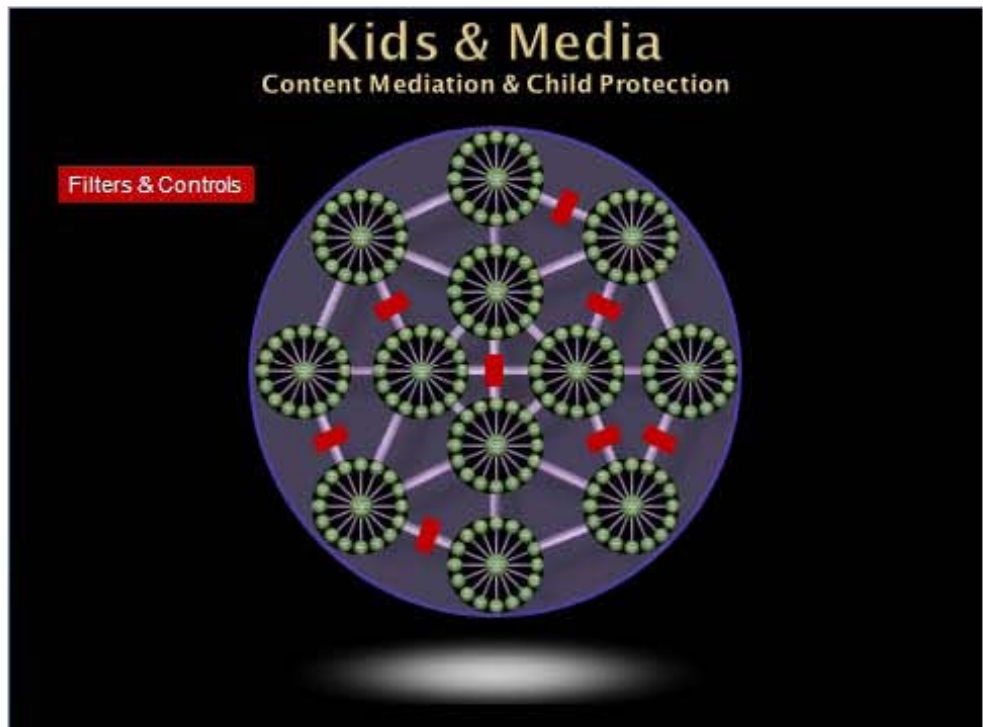
Twentieth Century era filters and controls could remain viable only if the systems of media creation, distribution and access remained separated by impermeable barriers.

In a system organized around the social media web attempts at mediation and control are circumvented by multi-point, peer-to-peer access. The effectiveness of filters and controls is compromised, fragmented and diluted by numerous and random interconnections. Children use a variety of media devices and content outside the purview of adult supervision and sometimes assist each other to overcome filters and controls.

In today's PME it is impossible to filter and control all possible channels of access and exposure using linear, mechanistic methodologies.

KIDS & MEDIA
Children and
the PME
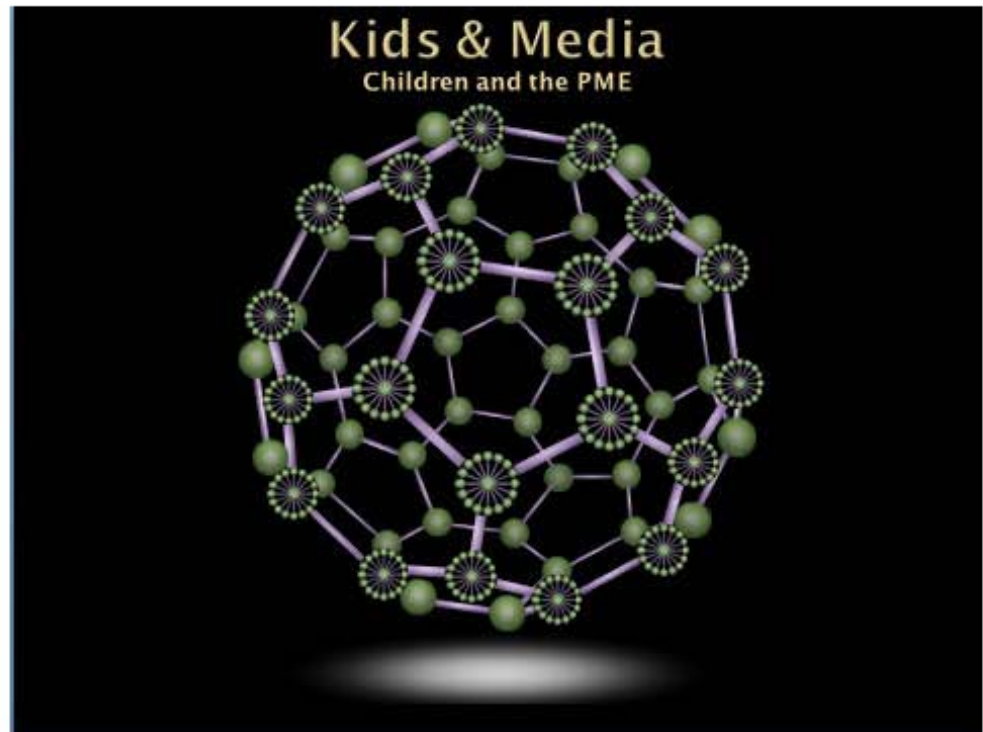
The hyper-linked young media consumer is no longer at the hub of media creation and distribution, but rather a node in a dynamic system.

Kids are integrated into the multinodal, interconnected, interdependent, tensegral and self-organizing PME. As a result, the problems and opportunities inherent in the PME clearly cannot be addressed monolithically or programmatically.

The spherical reality requires a spherical approach.

The issue should be addressed as a highly integrated, complex, dynamically changing system that can be influenced but not controlled. The influence must be socially organized and must account for and embrace the self-organizing nature of the system. In other words, the system for protecting kids must be part of and in tune with the system it is trying to influence.

In such efforts, no single node or connection can be considered or acted upon without accounting for the whole of the system.

The process requires that the stakeholders communicate and collaborate as they see, understand, feel and act to protect children and enhance the huge potential benefits of the PME.

**XII
KIDS & MEDIA
INITIATIVE**
**Spherical Processes
and Methods**
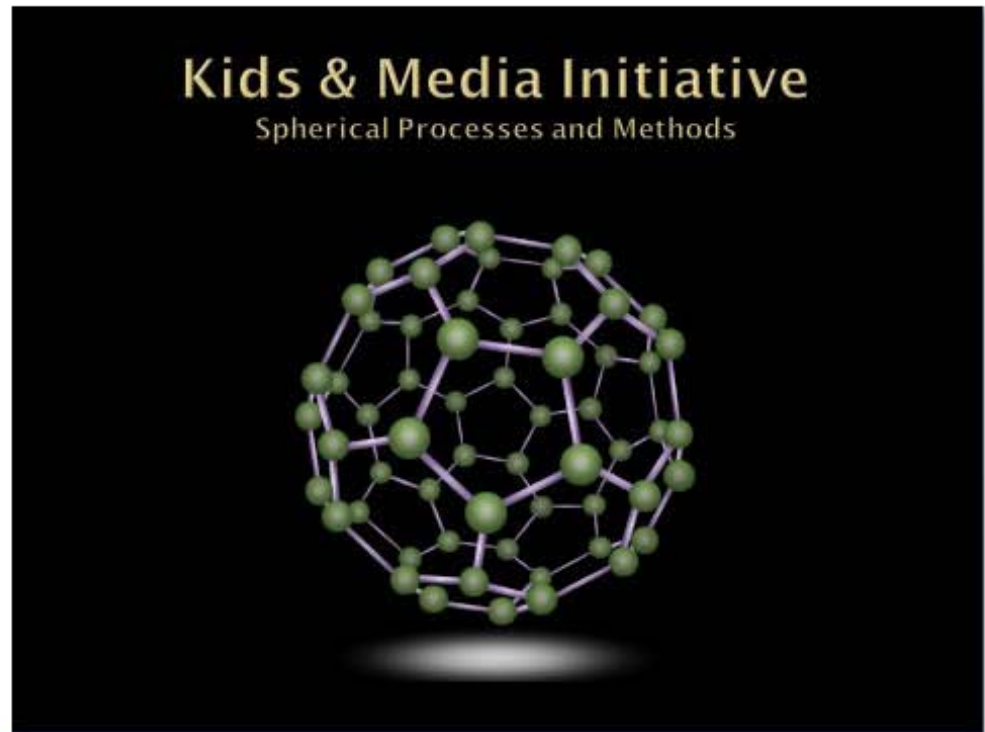
The application of spherical thinking and spherical processes to the issue of kids and media has the potential to 1) foster a shared awareness, 2) engage wider participation, 3) create better communication and 4) promote more creative, innovative and viable solutions.

**KIDS & MEDIA
INITIATIVE**
Stakeholders

Any efforts to address the issue of kids and media must take into consideration the wide range and large number of stakeholders. While the short list of stakeholders is fairly obvious, the initiative must be an effort shared by all of society.

A list of stakeholders, such as the one above, contains another problem besides limiting the perceived base of interested parties. It also creates a false sense of which stakeholders are most important by virtue of the way they are ordered. In the above list, who is most important? Who has the most to gain or lose? Where is the org chart?

KIDS & MEDIA INITIATIVE
Partmentalized & Task-focused Stakeholders

Though it might seem counterintuitive, stakeholders must resist the tendency to *focus* on the initiative and make it central to their efforts. Doing so causes individual stakeholders to concentrate their efforts narrowly on the specifics of the issue while losing sight of the activities of other stakeholders, leading to redundant and uncoordinated efforts and a partmentalized view that hampers rather than helps the initiative.

KIDS & MEDIA INITIATIVE
Leader-focused Stakeholders

It is also detrimental to the effort if one organization is seen as the hub of the initiative.

The impulse to have one entity serve as the clearing house and coordinator of the initiative is based on mechanistic organizational models from the past.

The danger is that the initiative stakeholders will erroneously perceive the lead organization as the source for sought-after solutions instead of one among many nodal contributors.

KIDS & MEDIA INITIATIVE
Interconnected and Interdependent Stakeholders

For the same reasons that the Kids & Media Initiative should not be visualized as the hub of stakeholder contributions, children and teens should not be seen as the sole focus of the initiative. Children and teens are only one node, albeit an important one, in the collective system-wide effort to make the PME safer and more valuable for all stakeholders.


KIDS & MEDIA INITIATIVE
Interconnected and Interdependent Stakeholders

A well-rounded (spherical) initiative is one which has no center, no central hub.

The stakeholders link and collaborate multidirectionally on issues guided by integrated perceptions and shared perspectives.

Spherical imagery and models facilitate the process by providing stakeholders a methodology and guiding principles for testing, evaluating, monitoring and comprehending the complex system of the initiative.
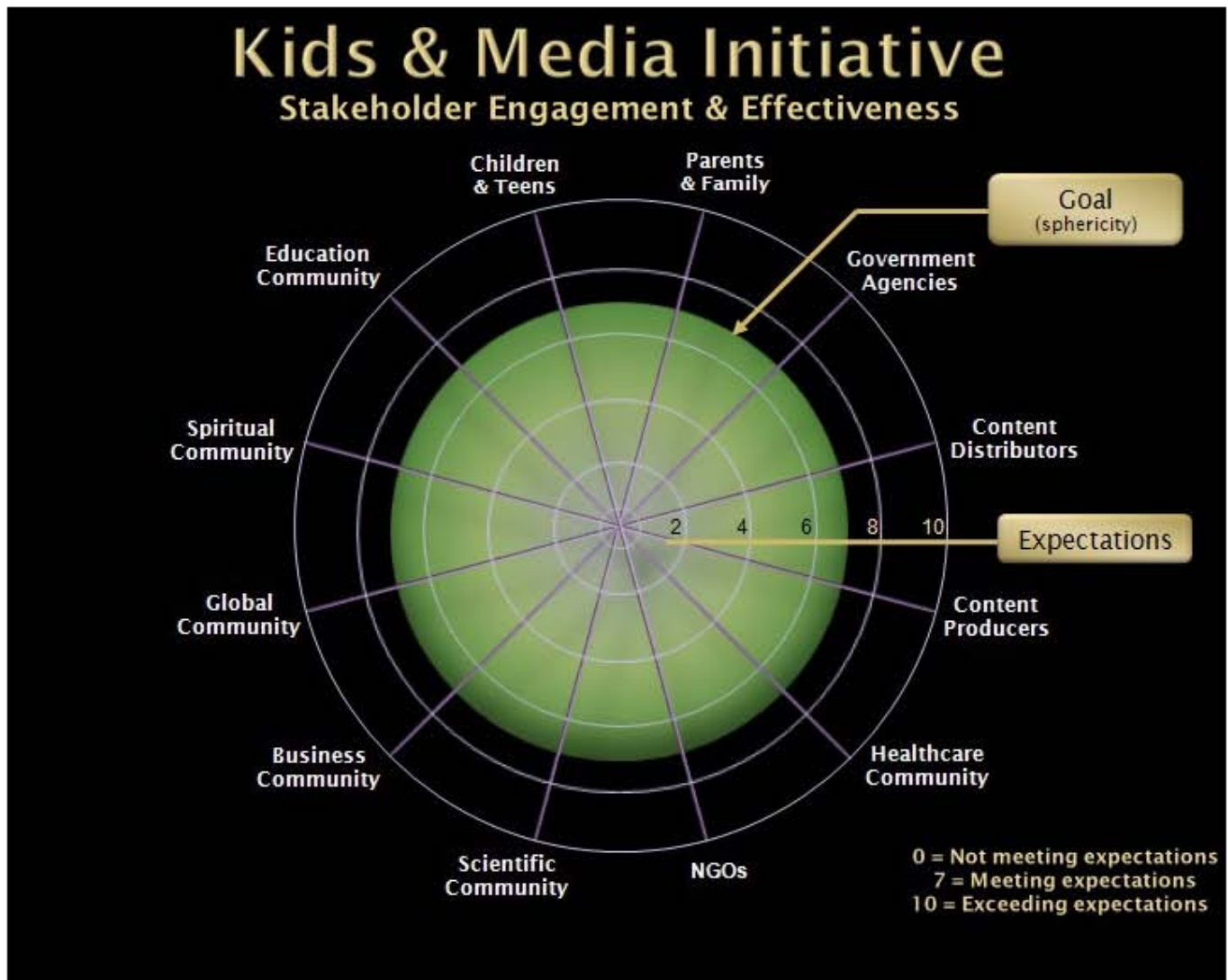
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & EFFECTIVENESS

When using the SMT, each stakeholder sets self-relevant goals that are deemed to be mutually beneficial toward the initiative. They participate and act out of mutual self-interest. That is, they contribute to the sphere of the initiative with the understanding and awareness that, in the big picture, they are ultimately helping themselves.

When working with the models and engaging in spherical methods stakeholders always see themselves in relation to other stakeholders.

The goal of the initiative is determined collectively by the stakeholders, not by a single stakeholder or external authorities.

The goals of the initiative, then, are unique to the stakeholders who set them. The stakeholders "own" the initiative.

When using the SMT, a fully rounded sphere represents the ideal, harmonic interplay of all stakeholder contributions and activities.

KIDS & MEDIA INITIATIVE
Stakeholder Engagement and Effectiveness
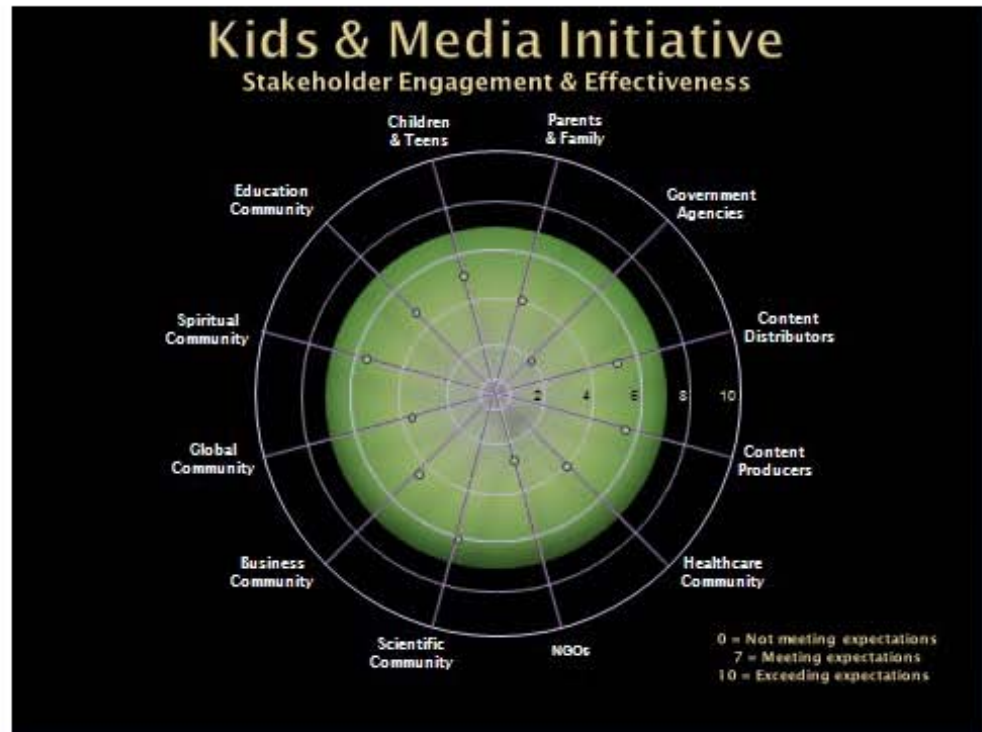
Stakeholders evaluate to what degree their efforts are meeting their own previously defined and collectively established expectations.

As they collaborate on defining problems and seeking solutions, they continually evaluate the state of their individual and combined efforts by plotting perceived values on the SMT model.

The model is ubiquitously shared and available to all contributors and other indirectly connected stakeholders.

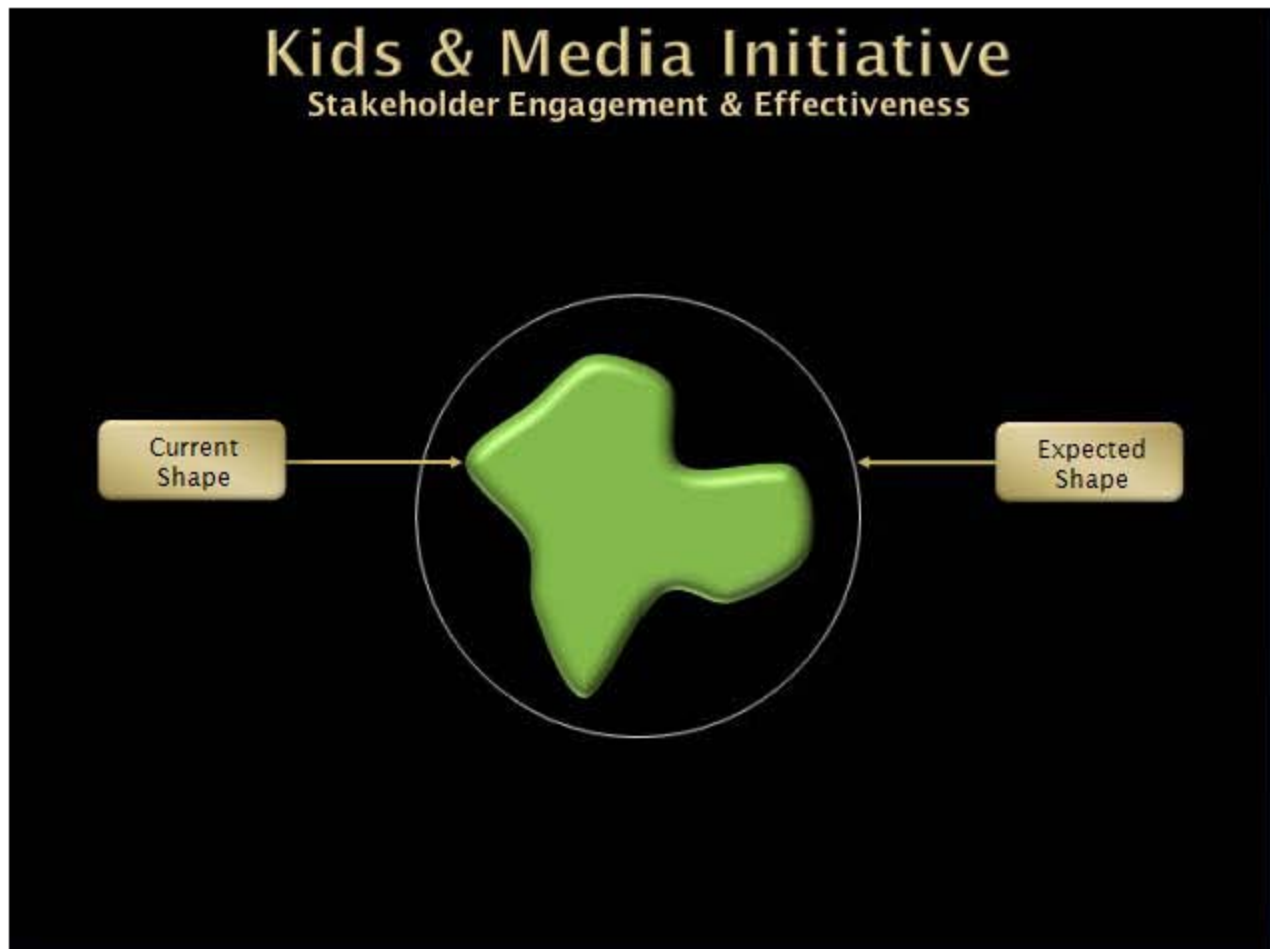**KIDS & MEDIA INITIATIVE**
Stakeholder Engagement and Effectiveness
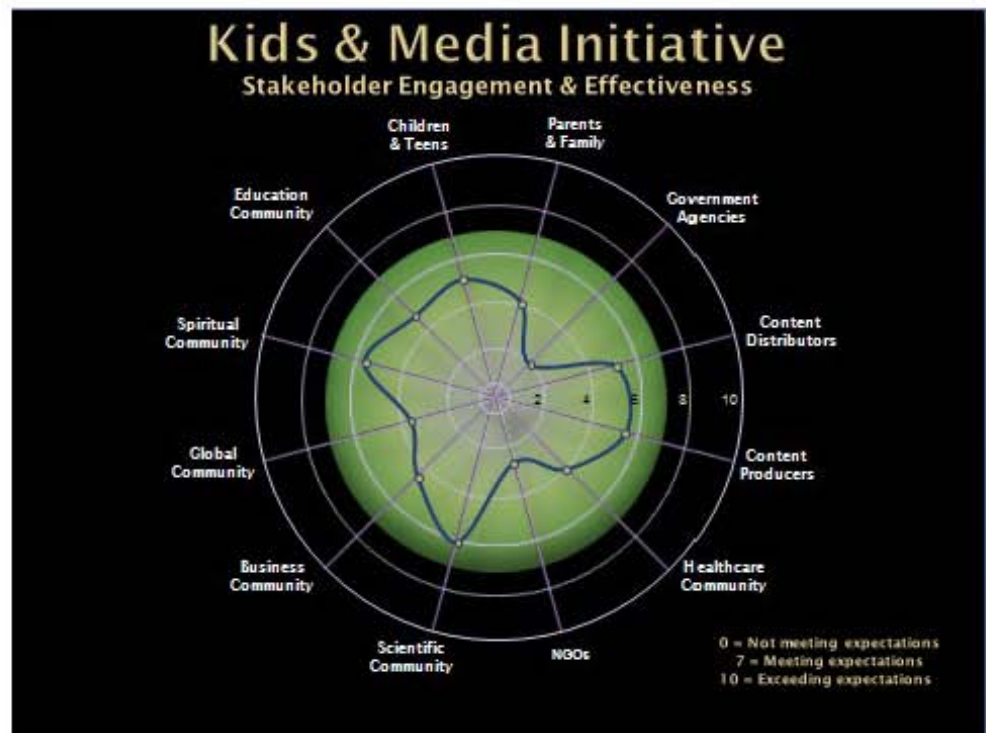
The plotted evaluations are connected to reveal a pattern. The pattern forms a shape.

The bumps and dents in the shape represent areas where the stakeholders are meeting, failing to meet or exceeding expectations.

The shape represents the current state of the system (initiative) as perceived collectively by the stakeholders.
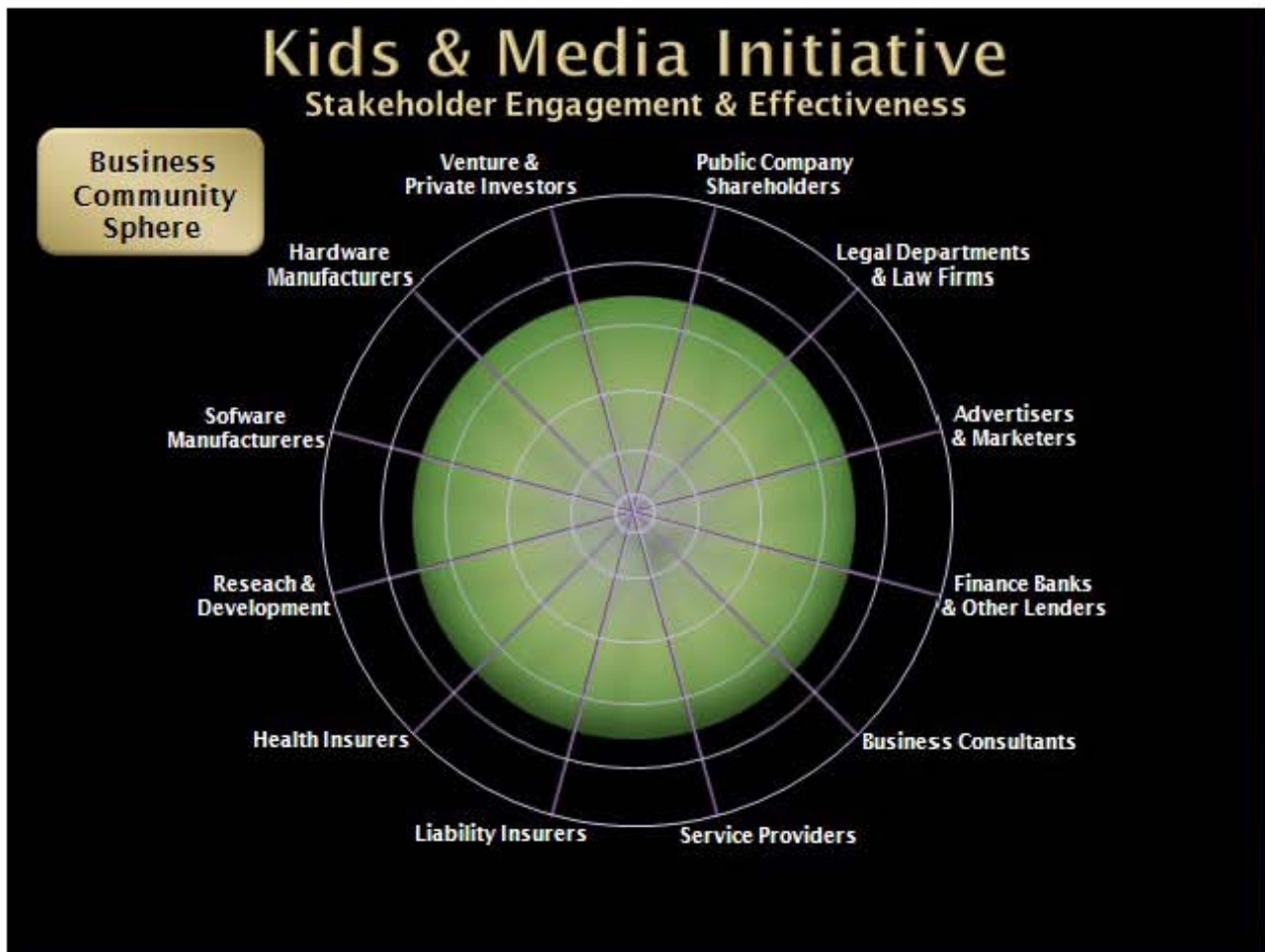
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & EFFECTIVENESS

   The resulting shape reveals areas of progress over time and depicts areas of achievement and deficiency.

   Stakeholders in the kids and media initiative see where and how they can contribute to rounding out the shape of the sphere. It makes visible the contributions and influences of each stakeholder and guides efforts to enhance the positive impact of the PME for kids.

   The stakeholders work together to come as close as possible to meeting their collective expectations.

   The SMT triggers questions such as: Are we happy with the shape of this initiative? What do we see that is of concern? What can I (we) do to reshape the sphere of this initiative?

Kids & Media Initiative
Stakeholder Engagement & Effectiveness

Business Community Sphere

Venture & Private Investors · Public Company Shareholders · Hardware Manufacturers · Legal Departments & Law Firms · Sofware Manufactureres · Advertisers & Marketers · Reseach & Development · Finance Banks & Other Lenders · Health Insurers · Business Consultants · Liability Insurers · Service Providers

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & EFFECTIVENESS

　　As in this example where the SMT zooms in to look at the sphere of the business community, we see that each of the stakeholders is a sphere within the larger sphere of the initiative.

　　The SMT is used by individual stakeholder groups to indentify the pertinent nodes, set expectations and evaluate progress.

　　They employ the image of the larger sphere of the initiative as a contextual reference to guide their efforts within their own spheres of influence.
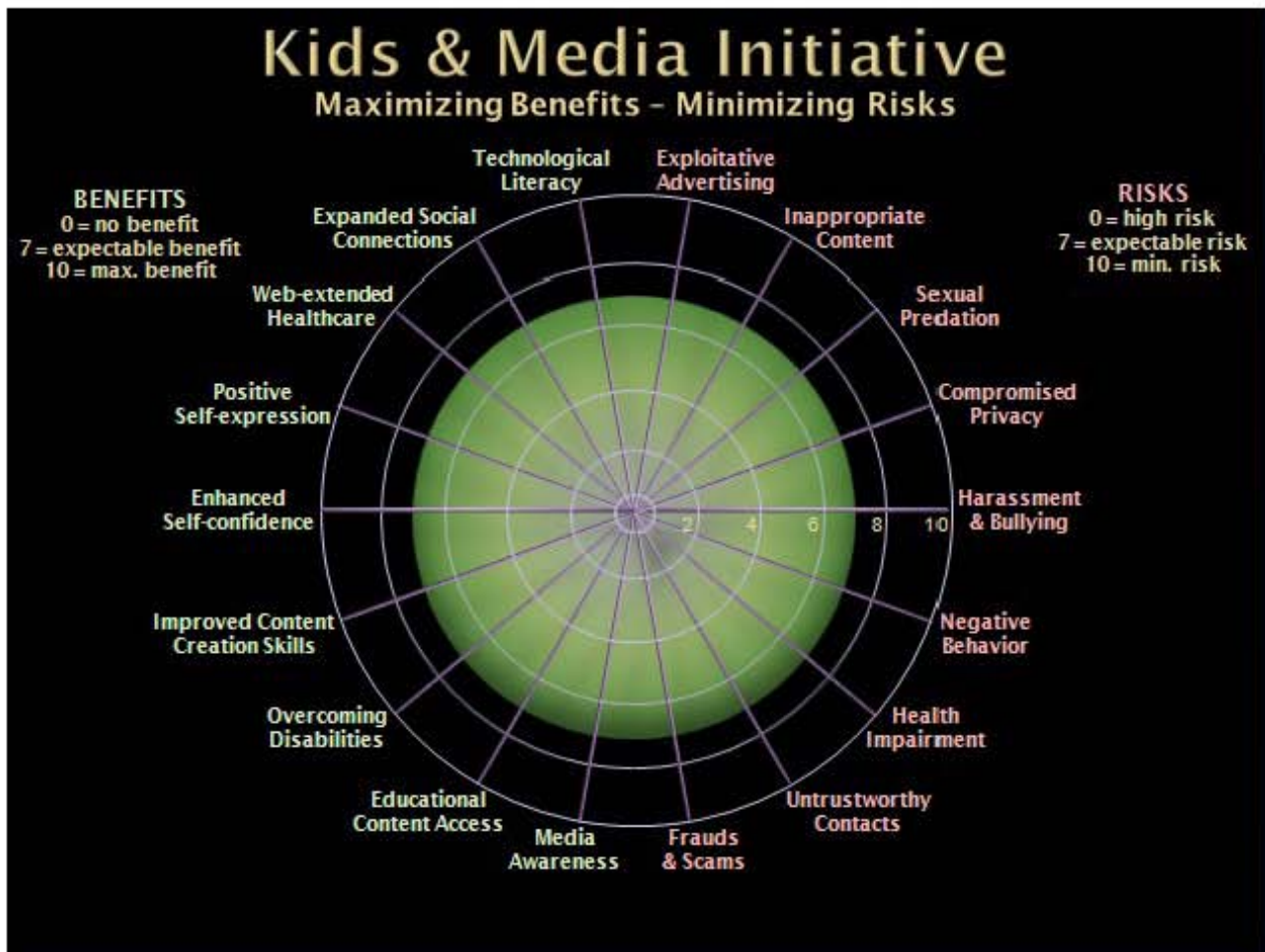
MAXIMIZING BENEFITS – MINIMIZING RISKS

In this hypothetical example of how the SMT can be adapted to various goals within the initiative, the stakeholders collectively identify nodes that represent the PME benefits and risks.

The visualization allows the stakeholders, and any other observers, to assess the progress of efforts to address individual benefits and risks as well as the overall shape of the effort.

Much of the value derived from the spherical modelling process results from the interactions, collaborations and dialog of the stakeholders as they strive to express their own perceptions and expectations and correlate them to the perceptions and expectations of other stakeholders.

The resulting assessments are an amalgamation of objective and subjective input that creates a readily understandable picture of the whole system as seen collectively by the stakeholders.
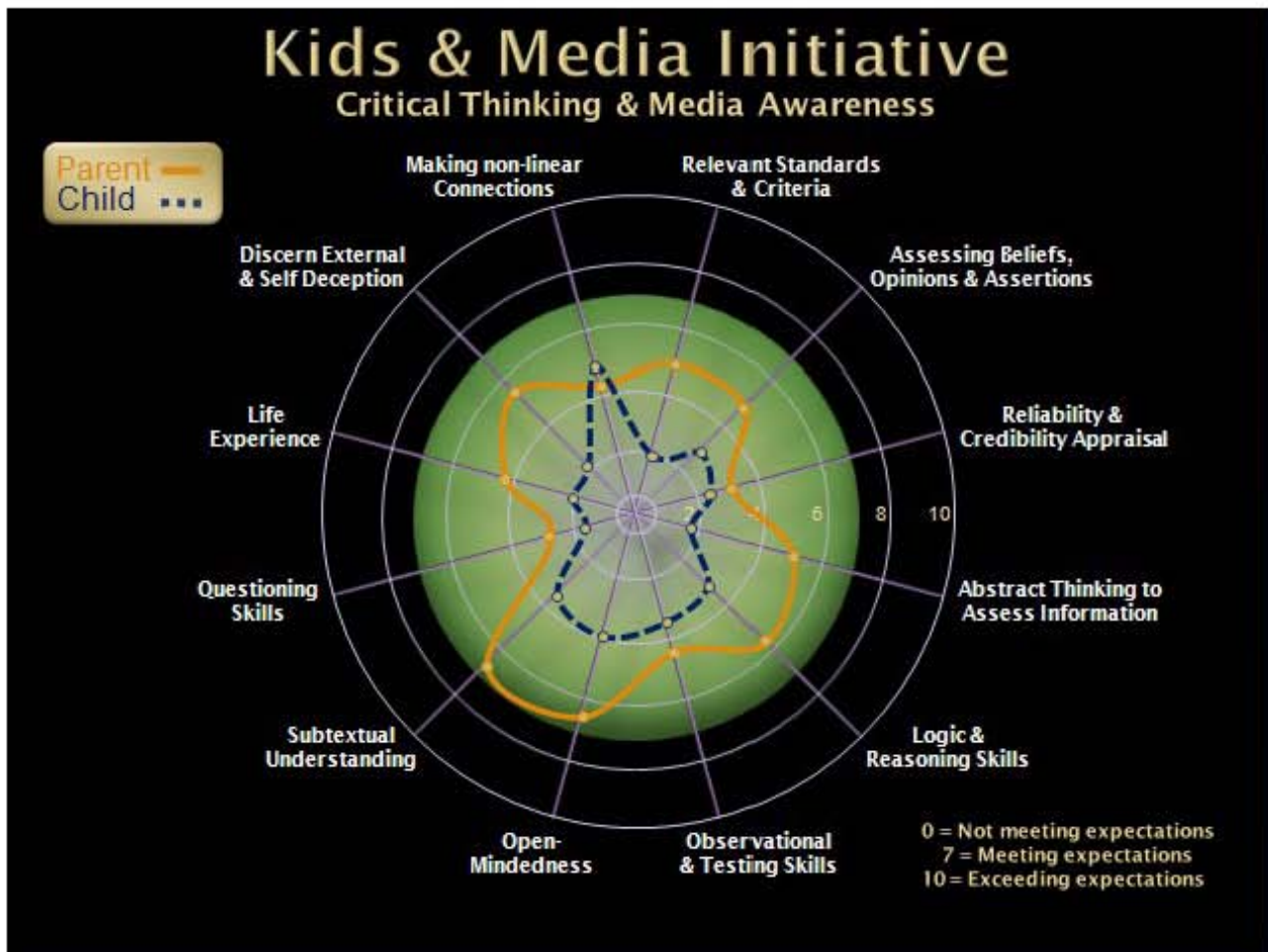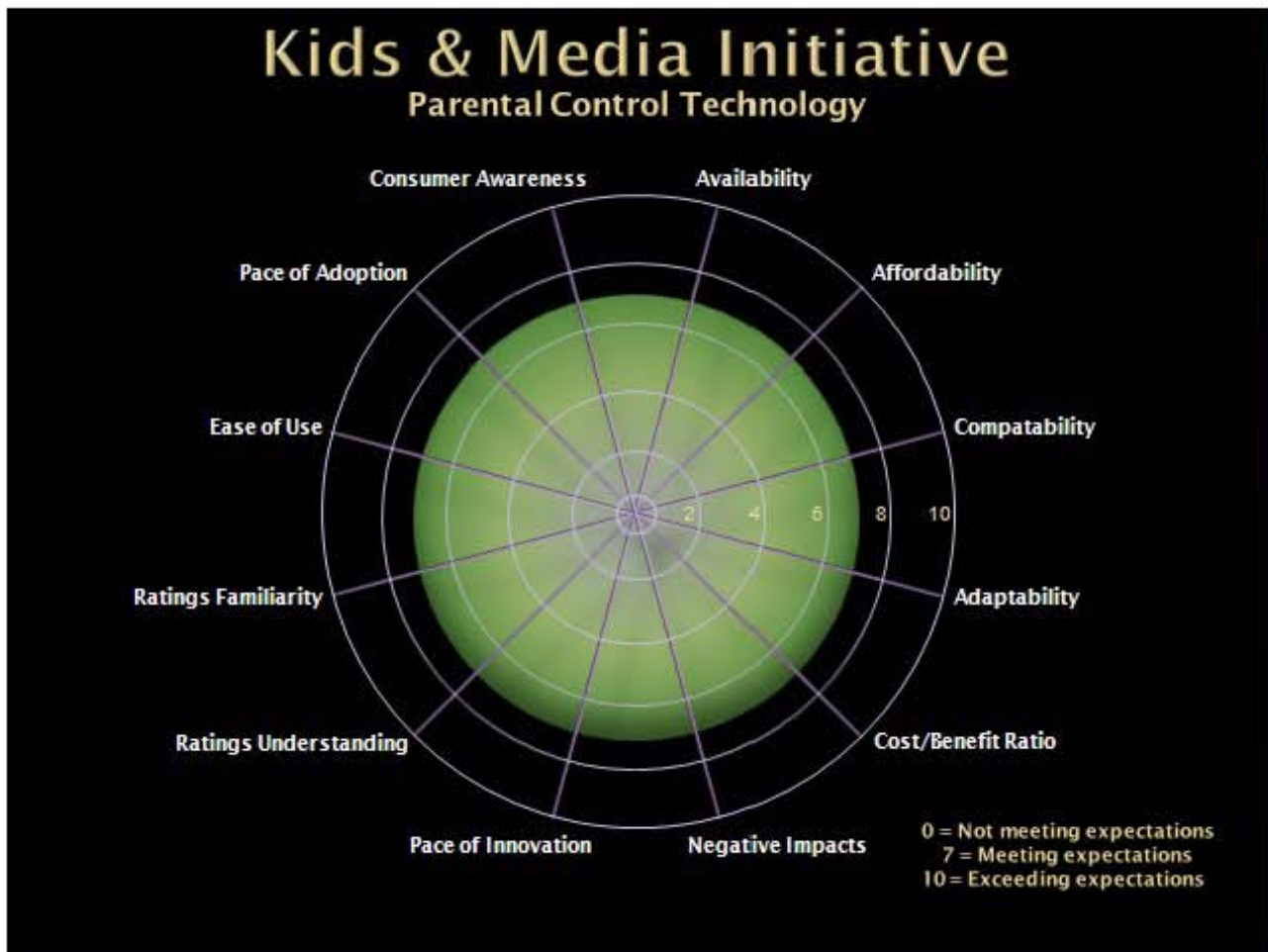
CRITICAL THINKING AND MEDIA AWARENESS

In this hypothetical example the sphere is used to evaluate the critical thinking and media awareness capabilities of parents and children.

Once plotted, the shapes of the parents and children can be viewed and assessed separately. Or they can be overlaid to reveal similarities and contrasts between parents and children.

This SMT method can be used to compare and contrast the critical thinking and media awareness of any individual or group of individuals within the sphere of the system.

The visualization reveals patterns over time and guides efforts toward action and improvement.

The same methodology can be used to guide and improve any system or subsystem related to the initiative.

Kids & Media Initiative
Parental Control Technology

Consumer Awareness · Availability · Pace of Adoption · Affordability · Ease of Use · Compatability · Ratings Familiarity · Adaptability · Ratings Understanding · Cost/Benefit Ratio · Pace of Innovation · Negative Impacts

0 = Not meeting expectations
7 = Meeting expectations
10 = Exceeding expectations

PARENTAL CONTROL TECHNOLOGY

This and the following example demonstrate variations on the same aspect of one of the primary issues in the Kids and Media Initiative.

Parental Control Technology, which is one node on the sphere of the initiative, is looked at here from the perspective of 12 basic nodes.

This streamlined version offers a quick glimpse into the most important aspects of Parental Control Technology as determined by participating stakeholders.
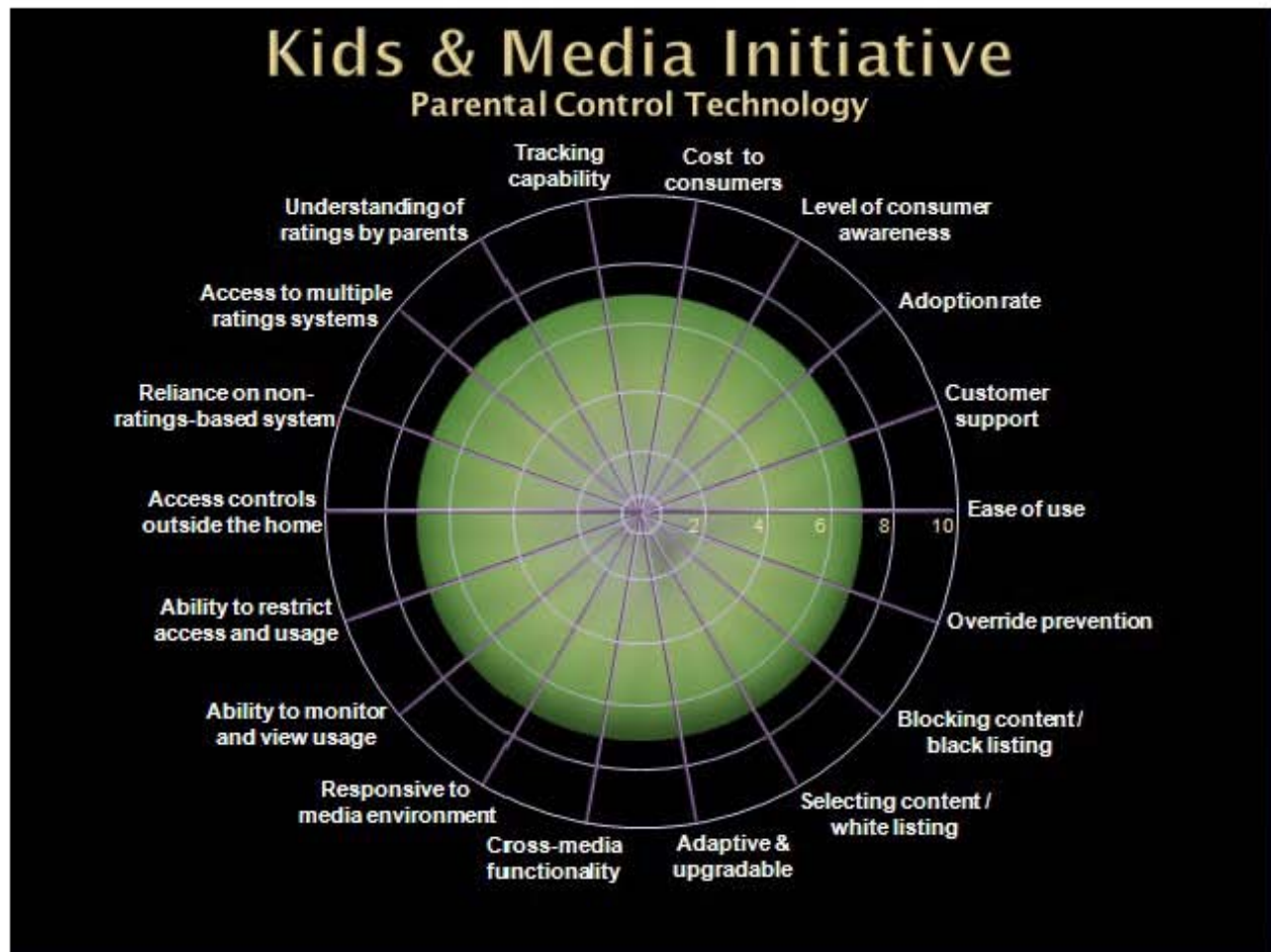
PARENTAL CONTROL TECHNOLOGY (alternate version)

In this more elaborate version based on the CSVA Report, the stakeholders have identified 18 key nodes that look at the sphere of Parental Control Technology in greater detail.

As stated earlier, much of the benefit of developing a spherical model stems from what is revealed during the co-designing of the SMT.

Stakeholders are compelled to delve into their own perceptions as well as strive to understand the perceptions and viewpoints of other stakeholders.

It is through this process of co-creative and collective visualization that healthy patterns of awareness and positive courses of action emerge.
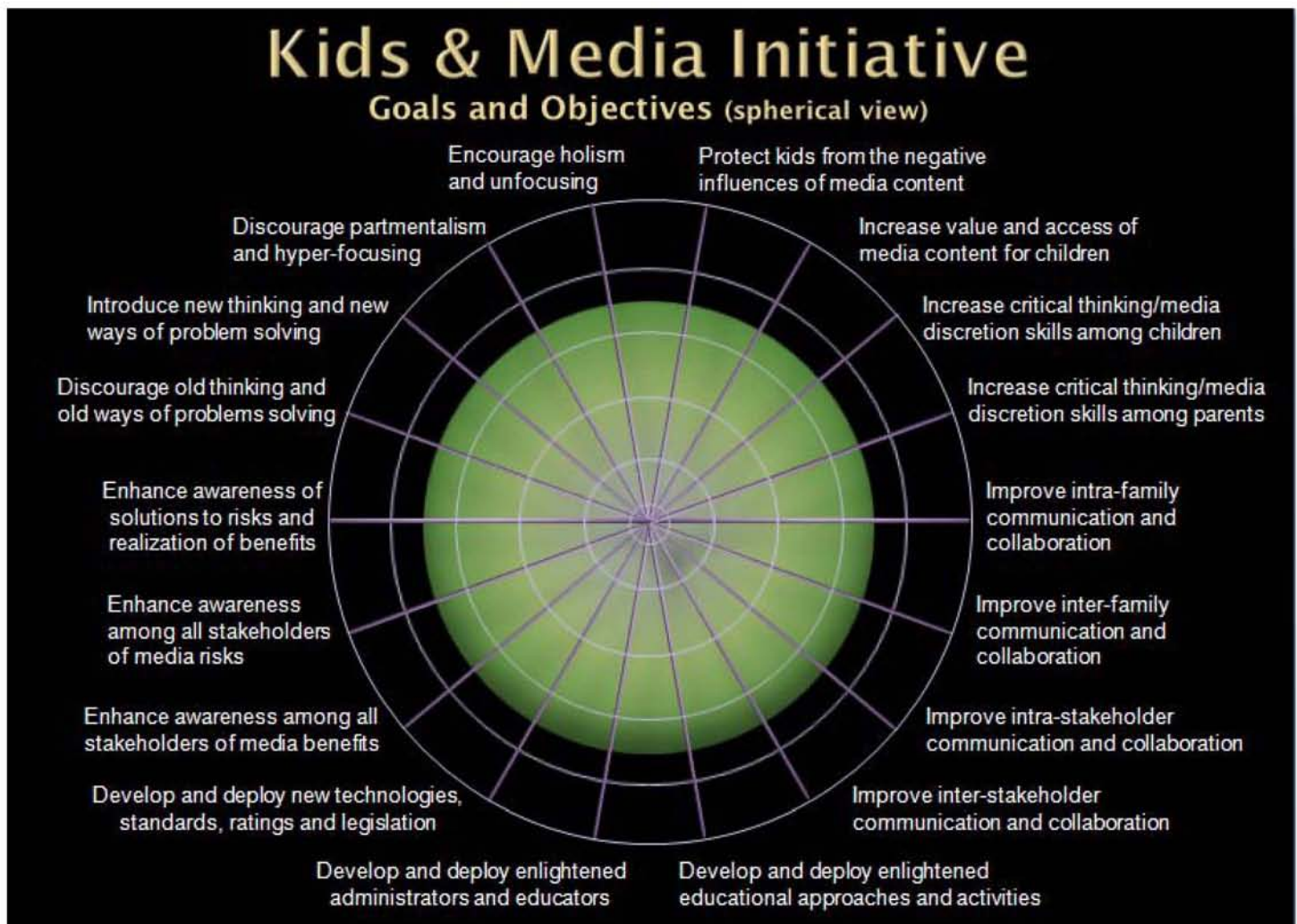
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (list view)

The goals and objectives of the Kids and Media Initiative are interconnected and interdependent. The SMT provides a non-hierarchical, holistic perspective that keeps all stakeholders aware of how the initiative is progressing with regards to their collective expectations.

- Protect children from the negative influences of media content
- Increase value and access of media content for children
- Increase critical thinking / media discretion skills among children and teens
- Increase critical thinking / media discretion skills among parents
- Improve intra-family communication and collaboration
- Improve inter-family communication and collaboration
- Improve intra-stakeholder communication and collaboration
- Improve inter-stakeholder communication and collaboration
- Develop and deploy enlightened educational approaches and activities
- Develop and deploy enlightened administrators and educators
- Develop and deploy new technologies, standards, ratings and legislation
- Enhance awareness among all stakeholders of media benefits
- Enhance awareness among all stakeholders of media risks
- Enhance awareness of solutions to risks and realization of benefits
- Discourage old thinking and old ways of problem solving
- Introduce new thinking and new ways of problem solving
- Discourage partmentalism and hyper-focusing
- Encourage holism and unfocusing

XIII. CONCLUSION – SEE THE SPHERE

A spherical approach helps all stakeholders see and nurture the interrelationships and interdependencies that are the heart of every system, every family, every community, every organization and every initiative.

It attunes actions to the prevailing conditions.

It helps them see things as they are and influence the shape of things to come.

Sphericity offers a simple and innovative way to address the complex issue of kids and media by providing a fundamental, communicable and transferable understanding across the spectrum of stakeholders.

Spherical thinking, processes and methods are not the answer to protecting kids. There is no perfect system that can do that. But it offers a holistic framework that, at the very least, will provide some integration, unification and sensemaking to what is by any standard a difficult and open-ended challenge.

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XIV. NOTES

1. The term "new media" is routinely used to describe the current state of media content and technology, but because the media environment is constantly evolving, the term "new media" has lost meaningful reference. In this comment we use "prevailing media environment" to refer to the current conditions of media, media development and media evolution.

2. The "complexity paradox" is one of the defining attributes of our modern world. Simply stated: *Increasing complexity demands increasing simplicity.* The more complex a system becomes, the simpler the processes for understanding it must be. In science, business and elsewhere we often address the problem of understanding complexity with the use of metaphors, animations, illustrations, charts, graphs, and the like.

3. As used here, worldview refers to the fundamental intellectual, emotional and evaluative assumptions of an individual or group about the nature of things. Our worldview is the frame of reference that guides, and often determines, our decisions and actions.

4. Sphericity is "a new way of looking at things." It refers to a collection of principles, guidelines, processes and models intended to speed the individual and societal transition away from an outdated, mechanistic mindset and toward an emerging, adaptive worldview. Its purpose is to help individuals and groups bring their thinking, perceptions, attitudes, decisions and actions into accord with 21st century complexity. Sphericity employs the holistic image of a multinodal, interconnected sphere to represent complex systems of dynamic relationships.

    The basic concepts of Sphericity were first outlined in 2000 in the unpublished book *The Death of the Box* by Phil Lawson and Robert L. Lindstrom. In 2004, Lawson and Lindstrom published the full description of Sphericity in *Being Spherical: Reshaping Our Lives and Our World for the 21st Century.* www.sphericity.com

    Sphericity also refers to a desirable condition and quality of being that emerges in systems that are energetically interconnected and in tune with other systems in the environment.

5. When presented in writing the spherical process appears as a series of steps (see, understand, feel, act) giving the impression that they occur in a set order. In practice, the phases of the process are non-linear and simultaneous.

6. The principles and philosophy of Sphericity are based on the premise that collaborative efforts are most successful when the overall results benefit the personal interests of all stakeholders. Because individual spheres are connected to the larger sphere of the endeavor, when individuals contribute positively to the health of the endeavor, they help themselves—they act in their own best interests.

7. Context most often refers to parts of writing or speech that precede and/or follow a word or passage and contribute to its full meaning. Here the meaning of "in context" refers to decisions that are made or actions that are taken with a full awareness of the prevailing conditions and circumstances relevant to the action.

8. Partmentalism is the common belief that everything natural as well as man-made is a collection of parts, and that if all parts are functioning correctly the entire system will function correctly.

9. E.g. Driving a car at high speed requires drivers to "unfocus" from the myriad details that pour in through the senses. Because high speed requires fast reaction times, drivers must stay broadly aware of the prevailing conditions and circumstances and avoid sustained focus on any one aspect of the driving process.

10. FCC - Child Safe Viewing Act (CSVA) Report, MB Docket No. 09-26 released Aug. 31, 2009. Page 3

11. FCC - CSVA Report. Page 3

12. A tensegrity agent (sometimes called a tensegrity artist) is an individual or entity that is talented at and responsible for fostering and maintaining dynamic connections in a system. (see page 17)

13. For information on Creative Commons licenses and procedures visit www.creativecommons.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS